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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[CONJUGAL INFELICITY.]

A WINSOME WIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"From Her Own Lips," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFIRMATION STRONG.

True from first to last—
The facts not otherwise than here set down.

DICK WILD's was certainly a strange story, but it was confirmed in every particular. He might have enlarged a little on the funeral appearance of the vehicle which had conveyed away the family from the Nest, and have heightened the description of the dismissal of the female servants, but the facts were undoubtedly true.

The keys of the place had been left at the house of Lord Toronto's agent in Hereford at a very late hour by Mrs. Mansfield herself, who was passing through, she said, and was glad to have the opportunity of leaving them that night, as she was going on at a very early hour in the morning.

She had seemed agitated, frightened indeed, the gentleman who spoke to her himself thought, and he had offered to see her to whatever hotel she might be stopping at, but she thanked him and said she had an attendant with her—the same sour-faced woman evidently whom Dick had described.

She apologised for calling so late with the keys, but she had seen the light in the window, and

was pleased to have the opportunity of giving them up without having to wait till the morning.

She intimated that the earl would not be at all surprised at the sudden step she had taken in leaving the Nest. There was a letter for him in the parcel which would explain everything.

Mr. Bulteel, the agent, thought it a somewhat odd proceeding, but he had a dinner party on, which was the cause of his house being lit up at that time of night, for Hereford is a place where folks are quiet and go to bed early as a rule.

He came out courteously enough and took the parcel, understanding, as he said afterwards when taken to task about it, that the earl knew all about it. He had seen nothing of any corpse or any vehicle likely to contain one, but he had been occupied with his guests and a little elevated with wine, and it had never occurred to him till afterwards that Mrs. Mansfield's visit at such an hour had anything remarkable in it.

He had not known it was so late, and when he comprehended what the hour had been, and the odd circumstances attending the lady's visit, the late tenants of the Nest were far away, and no one knew whither they had gone.

Dick Wild was not the only person who had witnessed that strange exodus. One Joseph Pickering, a man employed sometimes about the stables at Petronel when he chose to keep sober, had also seen the hearse-like conveyance and the strange driver, and had watched the proceedings attendant on the vacation of the pretty little house.

Joseph's word could be depended on for the most part. He was apt to take drunken fits that lasted for days at a stretch and be helpless and

incapable while they lasted, but when he was sober there was not a better or handier man in all the village, and the grooms and hostlers for many a mile round about were eager for his services.

He was sober now and returning from a visit to a sick horse, for he was something of a vet, in addition to his other accomplishments, when he was startled by meeting the Hereford omnibus, as he thought, in the lane leading to the Nest.

"Where can he be going to at this time of night?" he asked himself. "And 'tain't Bill at all," he added, in some surprise, as the vehicle came near, "it's a stranger."

He knew every driver and postillion in the county, and he had never seen this one before, nor the carriage, whatever it was, either, and he stared at it in amazement as it stopped at the garden gate of the Nest.

"That's a rum start," he muttered. "Why, it's nigh upon eleven o'clock."

Like Dick Wild he hid himself behind a tree the better to see what was going on, but he ventured farther than Dick had done, for he vaulted over the sunk fence at the bottom of the garden, and got near enough to the house to hear what was said as well as see what was passing.

He saw the lady brought out, carried by a gentleman and the sour-looking woman that Dick Wild had described, and he heard the driver declare that he "Wasn't going to carry no corpses."

"You shall be well paid for all," he heard the gentleman say in reply, and then something that he could not hear, and the man seemed to relent.

The gentleman gave him money, he

heard the chink of it, and the man eyed the whole party as if he did not like the business at all.

"Well, as long as I don't get into trouble it's all right, I suppose," he said to the woman; when the gentleman had gone into the house, and she had tossed her head and retorted that there was nothing to get into trouble about.

Joseph Pickering further declared that it turned his stomach to see the three people get into the conveyance with the corpse, but they did, and it drove rapidly away. He went straight home and told his wife and a lodger in the house the whole tale, and they, both of them, averred, as did others who knew, that Joe was quite sober on that particular evening.

It was all very mysterious, to say the least of it, but there was nothing to be done except to accept the fact that the tenants of the Nest had left in a curious and sudden manner under very suspicious circumstances.

It made Leonard Warburton and the ladies of Petronel very uncomfortable. The more so that they could not find out anything about the strange conveyance or its driver, or get any knowledge of where it came from or where it was going to.

It had gone in the opposite direction to Hereford at first, but must have changed its route afterwards, as Mrs. Mansfield, at least, had been in the city that night.

All sorts of uncomfortable things came to be said about the unseen husband of the younger lady. The servant who had been her special attendant, and who felt herself most particularly aggrieved at her summary dismissal, openly declared that she believed that the gentleman had made away with his wife and carried her body away with him to get rid of it somehow.

Her story was that she and the other female servants had all been dismissed together, and the young lady had been shut in her room. There had been high words, and Mrs. Stapleton had said she would not go away—that much the servants had heard—and also the declaration made by the gentleman to Mrs. Mansfield that she should go whether she liked it or not. The maid had asked to see her before she went, and was told she was very ill—nor did any of them see her after their dismissal.

She was not dead then, for they had heard her voice, shrill and angry, but not as if she were frightened, expostulating about something. It was a queer tale, and in the main points of it it was true. There had been a great deal of re-creation and unpleasantness, and Stella flatly refused to go out of the house unless she were carried.

"You can kill me if you like," she said to her husband, loud enough, foolishly, for the servants to hear. "I won't go out alive. I won't! I won't!"

How she did go out Dick Wild and Joseph Pickering had already testified.

Lady Carita felt quite ill and faint when she heard the horrible surmises that were afloat.

"It is too horrible," she said. "If it is indeed Noel Treherne, as you think, he is incapable of—"

"Of course he is," Mr. Warburton replied. "Don't look so frightened, Lady Carita. It will all be cleared up some time. There is a mystery, doubtless, but it may turn out a very simple matter when it is explained. Depend on it he had some valid reason for taking his wife away in that secret and sudden manner."

"But what reason?" Lady Beckenham said. "Midnight's not a time to take two ladies away from home. There must be something wrong and underhand about it all."

"I have a theory of my own," Mr. Warburton said, and Lady Carita looked up eagerly.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I think—mind I only say I think—that some infectious disease has broken out at the Nest, and that they have thought it well to leave without alarming the neighbourhood."

In his heart he thought nothing of the sort. He was not sure whether all that the servants and the man and boy stated might be depended on, but he did incline to the belief that the

master of the Nest had used means of some sort to get his wife away. Mrs. Mansfield had told him that she should tell him all that she knew, and he felt sure that the vain, frivolous girl would refuse to go away from the neighbourhood of Petronel.

He feared he scarce knew what, but there was no title of evidence to show that a crime had been committed. Though the circumstances were suspicious everything in the house was left in perfect order. The smallest details had been most carefully attended to, and there was nothing to warrant the gruesome reports which soon circulated through the village.

Mr. Warburton was glad when at length the two ladies went away on their visits and he was free to go back to London and meet the earl, who was hurrying home on the receipt of the strange news.

He was overwhelmed by the tidings. He had tried with all his might honestly to get the image of Stella out of his head, but the more he wandered about and tried the distractions of travel and continental amusement the more the image of that golden head and the glorious eyes with their dark lashes came between him and everything else, and drew him back in thought to the little house under the trees that held the woman he loved so frantically and hopelessly.

It was horrible to hear the story of her death, which came in garbled fashion from the Petronel servants' hall to his own man, and which was confirmed to some extent in Leonard Warburton's letter.

He telegraphed at once to his agent in Hereford, and begged him to send him all the particulars of the giving up of the Nest. That gentleman replied, stating how Mrs. Mansfield came with the keys, but declared he had heard nothing of any death. He fancied that the story had originated in someone's imagination at first, and that people had talked about it till they believed it.

In London the earl called on Messrs. Roxby and Sylvester and inquired of them what they knew of Mrs. Mansfield's movements. They were aware the lady had left the Nest. They said they had a letter from her on the very day of her departure, acknowledging some money they had sent her, but she made no mention of any death, nor hinted at anything unusual being the cause of her leaving the place. She was travelling somewhere, and they were in daily expectation of hearing from her.

This was all, and Lord Toronto was obliged to be content. They promised to let him know the lady's address as soon as ever they received it, and with this meagre information he went home to Petronel to try and find out something more there.

He was no more successful than Mr. Warburton had been. The inmates of the Nest had vanished as completely as if all of them, instead of one only, were dead and buried, and he went away again, to the great joy of his housekeeper, for his advent had given her no small trouble, when everything was covered up and put away, as she declared tearfully to the butler; but not before he had been more than once to the deserted house and gone into every room that he thought it possible that Stella might, by any chance have occupied.

There were traces of her presence there still. A tiny glove that could have belonged to no one but her lay in the fireless grate of her deserted boudoir, and he picked it out and apostrophised it as only an infatuated lover can rhapsodise over an inanimate thing.

It did not matter now; he was alone. There was no one to see him, no ear to hear the love he was pouring out for another man's wife.

Surely he was demented—he, the Earl of Toronto, lord of the land as far as he could see—that he could stand and whimper like a whipped child over a broken toy. But he was not alone nor unseen either. There was a witness to his despair and his rhapsodies.

Dick Wild was looking in at the window, and heard enough to give him a very lucid idea as to why the golden-haired mistress of the Nest had been discontented, and why her husband wanted to get her away in such a hurry.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SURPRISE.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than we have dreamed of in our philosophy.

TIME wore on, and no elucidation came to the mystery of the desertion of the Nest. It was no one's business to inquire what had become of the people who had lived there, and no one except Leonard Warburton and the two ladies whom he had told had any suspicion that Noel Treherne and the mysterious Mr. Stapleton were one and the same person.

Lady Carita began to think there must have been some mistake in that matter, for as time went on the name of Noel Treherne began to appear in the fashionable journals, as it had done now and then when he and his uncle had been notified as going abroad together, or paying a visit to a notable place. She read of his going to the Continent for an indefinite time with Mr. Treherne, senior, and a man who had just got rid of a wife could hardly be going about in that fashion.

Either the queer stories that they had heard were all false or Mr. Stapleton was some other person entirely. Dick Wild when questioned never varied a morsel in his tale, nor Joseph Pickering in his, and Lady Carita grew almost tired of questioning either one or the other. She had been determined to hear the tale from the boy's own lips, and had taken the trouble to visit the boy's mother and question him herself.

"I can't say nothing more, my lady, nor nothing less," Dick said, almost tearfully at her evident disbelief. "What should I tell her for about it? I'd no call to speak at all maybe, but the queerness of the thing took my breath away like, and 'twas just as I have said."

"Dick never tells lies," his mother said, with something of pride, and Lady Carita felt sorry she had shown any doubt.

Lord Toronto was still more searching in his queries than even his sister had been, and Mrs. Wild went so far as to tell his lordship that she was thankful that Dick was going away from Petronel altogether to a place where he would not be worried any more about what he had seen that night.

She was a fearless, outspoken woman, and the earl smiled at her vehemence, but took no offence at it.

"I don't want to bother Dick," he said, good-naturedly, "only I should like to get to the bottom of the business if I could. Where is he going?"

"It's a very long way, my lord, but the offer is a good one. Dick is going to Glasgow."

"To Glasgow?"

"Yes, my lord. His father has a brother there in a fair way of business—a farrier he is—and Dick likes horses, and he has offered to take the boy and see what he can do with him. I don't want to part with him, but it is a good opening for him, and I won't stand in his way."

There was something in the way in which the woman choked back her emotion while she was talking to the earl that excited his sympathy, and he heard more about her former life in his short visit than all the village had ever discovered in the years she had spent there.

She was a widow, the widow of a bad man who had well nigh broken her heart and brought her to the workhouse, and she had changed her name and come to Petronel to try to live as best she might, and bring up her boy in the way he should go.

This brother of her husband's in Glasgow had offered before to take the lad, but, mother like, she had refused to let him go till now when the offer was too tempting to be objected to any longer.

Money was sent for what outfit Dick needed, and if he was moderately well behaved there was every chance of his rising to a good position in his uncle's business.

"What great events from little causes spring," says someone among the wise of this world, and great events certainly sprang from the small fact of Dick Wild being offered a berth in his relation's business.

He went at the appointed time, as proud a boy as ever set forth for the first time on the journey of life. He did not find life all sunshine when he reached the north. But, on the whole, he was tolerably happy.

His uncle was kind to him, and though his work was hard, and he thought longingly of the idle days of his Petronel life, he grew interested in it, and was spoken of as a likely lad and one that would make something when he came to be a man.

His uncle was great in the treatment of dogs, especially such pet animals whose only complaint was over-feeding, and whose medicine consisted of water and enforced abstinence from food till they would eat the hardest crust, and he was sent some distance one evening with the pampered pet of a lady who lived at the farther end of Sauchiehall Street.

The houses in that quarter are not quite the fashionable domiciles they were once. Glasgow has gone with the times, and has its West End like any other large place, but they are roomy and comfortable and inhabited by people of good means and standing in Scotch society. A motherly-looking Scotchwoman opened the door and eyed him favourably.

"Oh, aye, you've brought the wee doggie," she said. "Come een, she's been wearying for it."

"Mrs. Stoddart?" the boy said, inquiringly. That was the name he had been told to ask for.

"Aye, that's right."

Dick was handing over the little animal to the woman of the house when a voice he knew sounded from a room close by.

"Oh, is that Puck? Bring him in here, please."

"Aye, it's the doggie," the landlady said. "Take him in, laddie, I'm nae for touching him."

Dick went towards the door from which the voice had come, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels. He could not be quite sure of course, but if ever he had heard Stella Stapleton's voice in his life that was it.

"It can't be," he muttered, "and yet—"
And yet it really was. There, sitting in a low chair, with a discontented expression on her pretty face, was the lady he had seen carried out of the Nest a corpse!

He dropped the dog, which ran to its mistress, barking joyfully, and stared at her open mouthed.

"Tell your master to send the bill to—" she began, and then she dropped the dog she was caressing and started up. "I know you," she said, excitedly, "you used to be at the Nest—at Petronel."

"Yes, ma'am."

There was a world of impatient sadness in her tone and a look of wild regret in her face that somehow Dick thought he understood. What he did not understand was how she came to be there alive when he had seen her carried out dead.

"Tell me all about the Nest," she said, eagerly, "all about Petronel, who is there, and—"

"Is the laddie going?"

It was the voice of the landlady, who had been waiting in the passage to let him out.

"Yes, in a moment," said Stella, looking, Dick thought, frightened. "I am only giving him some directions. I am a prisoner here," she went on, in an eager, excited whisper. "They will not allow me to see anybody. But my guardian dragon is ill. I want to talk to you, to anyone who has been to Petronel. Come back this evening after dark; I walk in the garden then; I won't do it in the day time to please them. You know the back way to these houses?"

"I can find it, ma'am."

"Do then; it is the white door. I must talk to you; you shall be well paid—I have plenty of money."

"They think you are dead at Petronel, ma'am," the boy said, in utter bewilderment at what was happening to him. "I saw you carried out."

"I daresay. It was a wicked ruse. I am alive, and they shall know it some time. Does he, the earl, think I am dead?"

"Yes, ma'am; and he was awfully cut up about it. I saw him, he came to the Nest and—"

"Yes—yes, and what?"

"Went on anyhow, ma'am. I—"

"Ye'll just gang awa' the noo, laddie, there's been quite enough talk about the wee beastie. If he wants any more doctoring we'll let ye ken."

Stella never looked up nor uttered a word, and the landlady showed Dick out into the hall.

"What's to pay?" she asked. "The mistress bade me give the siller to ye."

"The mistress! Do you mean Mrs. Stapleton?"

"I dinna ken ony Mrs. Stapleton."

"The lady in there."

"Oh, aye," the woman said, with a keen glance at Dick. "that's what you call her, is it? She has naething to do wi' it. I'll pay."

Dick thought it was all very odd, but he produced the bill, and the woman paid and dismissed him. He had evidently stumbled on a mystery, and he would see the end of it if he could.

He went through the day in a sort of dazed dream that made his uncle fancy he must be ill, for he was generally very attentive to his work. He had serious thoughts of writing to his mother and telling her of his adventure, but on second thoughts he deferred it; he should have more to tell when he had seen Stella again, and that he would see her he determined, whatever came of it.

She had spoken of herself as a prisoner, perhaps that was a little wide of the mark, but it was very near the truth. It was perhaps a fortunate accident that the report of her death enabled Noel Treherne to follow out what seemed to him the best plan for keeping his wife away from Petronel.

He had not intended her to be considered dead—he only wanted to leave the Nest secretly—and no one but himself and Mrs. Mansfield knew how hardly he had been tried, nor how bitterly he had been reproached by his unscrupulous and heartless wife before he took the means he did to get her away.

She had been carried out under the influence of an opiate, and only woke to find herself far away from the Nest, and to give way to passion so wild and unwomanly that she seemed for the time almost insane.

She openly told her husband that she hated him for standing in her way, that but for him she could be Countess of Toronto, and that she heartily wished him dead.

He did not make much reply to her ravings, but he told her plainly he should treat her as a lunatic as long as she remained in that frame of mind, and he did so, inasmuch as he placed her and Mrs. Mansfield in the house in Sauchiehall Street, and took measures for preventing Stella's having any communication with the outside world.

It was a bitter lot to have fallen on him in the very prime of his manhood, but he had brought it upon himself, and the only thing he could do was to hide the shame of her disloyalty in the only fashion he could. Mrs. Mansfield did her best, but the task was a hard one. Stella either openly defied her, or treated her with sullen contempt. They had changed their names—Mrs. Mansfield would have done anything for Noel—and were known by the name of Stoddart.

The woman of the house, if she thought anything about it, looked upon the elder lady as the mother-in-law of the younger one; it did not matter to her as long as she got her rent all right, and she was paid promptly and well.

Noel Treherne could not be with them much—his uncle was ailing and not likely to last long, the world said—and he must keep his secret more jealously than ever now.

It would have been bad enough to have had to acknowledge a happy marriage and owned a wife that he could have taken to the old man and introduced as one who would be as a

daughter to him. To tell him he had married a woman who openly told him that she wished he was dead that she might marry another man was more than he could do.

He left his wife very much to the charge of Mrs. Mansfield, and for awhile all had gone smoothly—at least, there had been no attempt on Stella's part at any open disobedience to his wishes, but her duenna was very ill now, and mischief was brewing from the chance visit of Dick Wild.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST STEP.

And hence one master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows all the rest.

Dick slipped away that night as soon as his work was over to avoid being questioned as to where he was going. His uncle was indulgent enough, and did not trouble much about his comings and goings as long as he behaved himself and kept decent hours. But he often asked where he was going, and Dick told him without any reserve. He was not one of those men who are apt to forget that they were boys themselves once and make harsh rules which are almost death to restless young natures to keep.

"Take your flog in moderation, lad," he said to his nephew, when Dick came to know Glasgow well enough to go about without losing himself. "You're welcome to it as long as you don't do anything dishonourable or disgraceful. I shall know how to put the curb on when I hear of anything wrong."

Dick was on his honour, and when that was the case he might have been trusted anywhere. He was not afraid to let his uncle know where he was going, but he scented a mystery and future profit perhaps, and until he knew what was going to come of it he would keep the whole affair to himself.

He felt very guilty as he made his way to the back of the houses as he had been told, wondering if indeed the lady would be there, and if she was, what she would say to him. He waited about some little time before he saw the white door open slowly and Stella's face peep out.

"Come in here," she said; "it is quite safe. They think this door is locked, and the woman of the house is at her supper. I sometimes stay out here for an hour just to annoy them. They won't come out."

Dick followed her into the garden, feeling oddly bewildered. Why was she not allowed to see anyone? he wondered. At the Nest she had been mistress and allowed to do as she liked; here, it seemed, she was nobody.

"Now," she said, eagerly, when he was fairly within the door, and they were standing in the shadow of the high wall, "tell me all about it."

"All about what, ma'am?"

"All about the Nest and Lord Toronto. You said he was sorry that I was gone. What did he say? How did he look? Who saw him? Who heard him?"

"I did, ma'am."

"You were with him in the house?"

"No, ma'am. I saw him go in, and I thought if I opened the gate for him when he came out maybe he would give me something; he's a free-handed gentleman in his lordship."

"That he is," Stella said, enthusiastically. "Everything that is good and noble. Go on."

"Yes, ma'am," Dick answered, demurely, feeling more than ever glad that he had not told his mother or his aunt of his appointment with his former mistress. "I waited, and presently I heard his lordship's voice. I knew there was no one there but him, and I thought it was funny, and I got over the fence to see."

"Yes, yes, and you saw—"

"I saw him in your room, ma'am. The one at the side."

"My boudoir. Yes."

"A talking to a glove that he had in his hand. He spoke your name, and kissed the glove over and over again. Said life was nothing to him without you, he did, and he wished he

could lay it down and be in the grave beside you, and—and all that."

Dick came to rather a blundering end of his story, and to most people it might have seemed that he was inventing it, but in truth he had given a very fair résumé of the rhapsodies he had listened to, which had been more like the ravings of a lunatic than the speech of a sensible young man like Arthur Petronel.

But love like that is a madness, as men are apt to find to their cost when they have flung aside the substance and grasped the shadow, and find only gall and wormwood left of the sweetness that was to be eternal, and Lord Toronto had the horrible fever on him in its worst phase.

Stella questioned and questioned the boy till he could tell her no more, and learned from her in return how the ruse upon her had been practised, and how she was kept from intercourse with the outer world.

"I shall never forget you—never," she said, slipping some money into his hand. "Some day I may be able to do something better for you than this. I will remember it when the time comes."

She ushered him out into the lane and shut the gate upon him, for she heard someone coming. She was only just in time, for the woman of the house was hurrying down the garden path in search of her.

"Mrs. Stoddart is spiering for you," she said. "I couldna find you anywhere."

"I have been here some time."

"It's nae a very wiselike thing to do, to stay out here i' the cauld."

"I must have air, and I choose to take it by myself," was the ungracious reply. "I will not be walked out as if I was a baby or a lunatic and you were my keeper. Tell Mrs. Stoddart I am quite safe, I have not run away, and I will be in directly."

"Oh, but she's a awfu' lassie to deal with," the woman said to herself, as she walked in with her message. "I wadna be Mistress Stoddart for a trifle. I could have sworn I heard her talking to someone, but that's nae possible, for the door's locked, and the key's hanging on a nail in the house."

So it was, but Stella had used it to some purpose and unlocked the gate that afternoon while the landlady was asleep. She followed the woman to the house, and went upstairs to where Mrs. Mansfield was lying really very ill.

She said Glasgow did not agree with her, and perhaps it did not, and there had been depressing, damp weather for the past few weeks, but it was more the life she was leading that was telling on her. She did not complain more than she could help of Stella, but it was like dealing with a madwoman to put up with her wicked waywardness and temper.

She must give it up, she told herself, the very next time that Noel came to them. She could not keep it up any longer. He must find some other custodian for his wife, even if he had to confess his marriage to his uncle and lose his favour for ever. She had struggled on for Noel's sake, knowing that the old man's life could not last very long, and that any shock would tend to shorten it, but her energies were failing her, and, truth to tell, she was afraid of her charge.

Stella seemed at times as if she were possessed by an evil spirit, so strange were her moods, and Mrs. Mansfield, sometimes when she was alone with her, thought that even her life was not safe. It was the morbid fancy of an invalid that magnifies everything into huge proportions, and she had a queer dread on her also that Lord Toronto and Stella would meet again sometime. She did not doubt the earl's honour, but she feared that accident would bring the meeting about, and she knew he could not trust himself, and Stella would not try to put any curb on her feelings.

It was not at all likely that the earl would come to Scotland, but the fancy grew, and she could not sleep at nights for thinking of it, and at last she was quite laid by and obliged to keep her room. The doctor talked about weak nerves and langour just as the one at Petronel had done, with about as much notion of what was

really the matter as his village predecessor, and with as much idea of what the symptoms meant.

The tonics did no good and the nourishing diet had no effect, and it was a very white, wan face that was lifted from the pillow when Stella at length made her appearance with a hard, defiant look in her eyes.

"My dear child, you are very late coming up. Where have you been?"

"In the garden."

"Till now?"

"Yes."

"Is that wise? It is a damp night, is it not?"

"It does not rain."

"Still it is damp. You should take care of yourself."

"What for?"

"That you may not be ill."

"Who cares whether I am or not? What does it signify?"

She laughed, a hard, bitter laugh, as she spoke, and Mrs. Mansfield looked at her reproachfully.

"It is your own fault, Stella, if no one cares," she said. "But you are wrong. There is someone who cares."

"Yes, of course," was the sudden reply, in a strangely excited tone. "There is someone who cares, and it makes life worth having, does it not, to know it? I have taken no harm out in the garden. You do not begrudge me the only breath of fresh air I get, surely."

"I grudge you nothing, child. Heaven knows I am enjoined enough to let you have everything you want."

"Except my liberty. I may dress myself like a duchess if I choose, and I am going to choose from this time remember, and I may eat and drink what I like, and I will too. But I must not go out. I must be a prisoner forsooth because a man says he would have married me if I had been single. I won't be paraded out arm in arm with you or that woman downstairs. I won't!"

Mrs. Mansfield said nothing. She had a dread beyond measure of Stella's fits of temper, and would do anything rather than provoke one.

"I don't think I am so well to-night, dear," she said, presently. "Stella, I am troubled to know what you will do when I am gone."

Her words and something in her face startled the heartless creature into something like feeling.

"When you are gone, auntie?" she said, in a tone more like her own than Mrs. Mansfield had heard for a long time. "What do you mean?"

"Just that, child. When I am gone."

"But you are not so ill as that. You are not going to die."

"I think I am."

"Oh, no, no. You are poorly and weak, and low-spirited, and I have been thoughtless and selfish, but you will be better when the fine weather comes. I heard the doctor say so."

"Doctors are mistaken sometimes," the invalid said, "and this one is. I know I shall never get up again, Stella, and you must telegraph to Noel and say so."

Stella burst into passionate tears of grief and repentance. Her sorrow was as violent as her temper, and the invalid had great difficulty in soothing her and making her reasonable. She had not been used to illness, and she had been so wrapped up in herself that she had not bestowed much thought on the langour and prostration that had assumed suddenly, as it seemed to her, such a terrible form.

She sent for the doctor in bitter self reproach and grief that were genuine enough for the time, but it was only to hear what Mrs. Mansfield had said confirmed. There was but little chance of her life; she was fading out of the world, and before long Noel Treherne would have his wilful wife on his hands to guide and guard as best he could.

Luckily he was in London when the message reached him, and able to get to Glasgow without exciting any suspicion on the old gentleman's part, but he was only just in time to see his trusted friend alive. She died within a few hours of his arrival.

If he was grieved and harassed by her loss he was agreeably surprised at the change that had come over Stella. He laid it to the shock of the death, and feared that it would not last, but to his surprise she seemed to grow more and more amiable every day.

He had left her capricious and wilful, passionate and overbearing to a degree, a heartless and unloving creature, he found her gentle and amenable, ready to obey his slightest wish and to yield to him in true wifely fashion in everything that he thought was for her good. A little absent perhaps and given to dreamy reveries, but a new and wonderful Stella who was almost nicer than the impulsive girl he had rescued from starvation at Ayr.

Things might come right between them after all he told himself, and the life that he had pictured to himself might be his yet with the lovely wife that he had married from the pity that is akin to love.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

DANGERS OF ANILINE REDS.—A number of the aniline colours, especially the red pigments, are, in the course of their manufacture, oxidised by the use of arsenical acid, and some of the arsenic is retained in the finished colouring matter. When such colours are used for dyeing, for wall papers, for artificial flowers, etc., they become carriers of a dangerous poison, whereby sickness and suffering are extensively occasioned. The only real safety is in the use of good cochineal for red colours.

INDEX OF REFRACTION OF EBONITE.—Professors Ayrton and Perry are carrying out a series of experiments to determine the index of refraction for light of ebonite. This substance is usually regarded as quite an opaque body. The first experiments show this index to be roughly 1.7, the square of which is 2.89. Direct experiment on specific inductive capacity of ebonite gives a result varying from about 2.2 to 3.5. Maxwell's electro-magnet theory of light would make these values equal. There is no doubt these indefatigable workers mean to thoroughly test the claims of Maxwell's theory, and the final results of their investigation, whatever they may be, cannot fail to be extremely interesting.

THE STENOGRAPHIC MACHINE.—The stenographic machine, which was presented on March 11 to the Société d'Encouragement, meeting under the presidency of M. Dumas, is a small instrument, about 1 foot and a half long and 1 foot wide, placed on a stand 2½ feet high, on which it is easy to play with both hands. The number of elementary signs is only six, which by mutual combination give seventy-four phonetic letters. It has been worked with an astounding velocity, reproducing the words pronounced by a man reading a passage from a book. The limit of velocity is stated to be 200 words in a minute, which is more than sufficient, no speaker having ever uttered more than 180. The signs are very neatly printed on a paper band passing automatically under the types. They can be read by any person conversant with the peculiarities of the system, which requires the teaching of a very few months. The work of the stenographer is more difficult, but in little more than a year he can be educated. Women and persons who have an acute and correct hearing can practise it with success. Blind people, generally having very delicate hearing, will be most useful, the reading and translation being done by other people. The same machinery is available for every language in existence. The system is so perfect that it can be used for reproducing a language that is neither spoken nor understood by the operator. But under such circumstances the orator must speak slowly and in a very distinct manner. This machine was worked by a young lady belonging to the stenographic staff of the Italian Senate, where the machine is in constant use.



[NEVER AGAIN.]

A BURIED SIN; OR, HAUNTED LIVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Kate Branksome's Foe," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TIMELY AID.

After him, then!
Dog his retreating footsteps till the spot,
Lonesome and wild, be apt for the wild deeds
We have designed.

DYKES, the keeper, and his wife have not yet lost their eccentric lodger. His shabby clothes have become still shabbier—the continued friction of the life he leads has rendered them almost unwearable. But on his finger he still displays the ring of price, with its curious antique setting and its big, flashing brilliants, and every Monday morning he glances at the total of the weekly bill and pays it without scrutinising the items. So Dykes and his wife are well content, and hope that he may stay on for ever.

They wonder sometimes at his prolonged sojourn. He has filled a case or two with "specimens," and Mrs. Dykes emphatically believes there is not an insect to be found in the Freston woods of which he does not possess a counterpart. She is more convinced than ever that he is a harmless lunatic, but since he "pays like a lord," she harbours him gladly.

His habits are as regular as at first, but of late he has indulged pretty frequently in an afternoon siesta.

After tea, however, when it begins to grow dusk, he seizes wicker basket and gauze butterfly net, and saunters in the direction of the castle.

Mrs. Dykes cannot understand what he expects to catch at that hour, unless it be worthless goats or rabbits, but she shrugs her shoulders and holds her peace. She says it is "none of her business."

It is Mr. Miles's business apparently to prow at this hour as near the castle as he dares. There is not much to see. He may perchance catch a glimpse of St. John Darrell and Lady Dunraven strolling on the lawn or in the Dutch garden, and awaiting the bell which tells it is time to dress for dinner. He may perchance see them chatting together afterwards in the lighted drawing-room whilst the curtains are yet undrawn.

It would appear that such spectacles afford him ample food for wrathful meditation. He stamps and shakes his fist like a veritable madman for five minutes at a time, then vanishes for awhile during the progress of the meal, to reappear later and creep nearer and nearer until perhaps his inquisitive old nose is flattened against one of the windows, as it was that night when Lady Dunraven was frightened by an apparition, the genuineness of which St. John Darrell doubted.

To-night he has had a more violent fit of anger than usual, merely because, staring from outer darkness (for by reason of a beclouded sky the evening has closed in early) at two figures who have passed from the radiance of the drawing-room into the dimness of the conservatory, he has seen the lady gather with her own fair hands and deftly arrange a bouquet for the gentleman's coat.

It is true that the process was longer than might be considered necessary, true that there was needless intertwining of fingers and lingering in the gloom, true that the conversation could hardly be of so confidential a nature as to entail low murmurings in the most leafy nook of that tropical paradise, but since the whisperers are a rich and beautiful young widow and a bachelor of five and thirty, who ought to "range" himself, and whom she desires to marry, there is surely no occasion for Mr.

Miles, the entomologist, to fly into a rage most unbecoming to a gentleman of mature age and presumptive respectability.

His language is the highest degree unparliamentary as, muttering threats of direst vengeance, he gains the avenue and hurries down it at a pace which is neither suited to his own years nor to the warmth and closeness of the evening.

The speed at which he travels is quite objectless, unless on the principle that severe bodily exertion acts as an excellent mental safety-valve, for before very long he describes the military evolution known as "right about face" and retraces his steps with unflagging energy.

Above a ridge of black clouds a crescent moon has risen. Between the rows of huge trees which stand like two regiments of giants drawn up in parallel lines it shines full upon his green spectacles and brass buttons, and stretches in his rear a shadow yet more quaint than the figure he cuts in his swallow-tailed coat, his immense shirt collar, his Mexican sombrero, and his tight inexpressibles.

Twenty yards or so behind are two other figures which have sprung from behind the trees, and which follow swiftly and noiselessly in his wake.

They have an evil reputation in the neighbourhood, those last named shadows, just released from the durance vile to which a penchant for the earl's rabbits recently subjected them. They are Black Mike and his fidus Achates, Slippery Sam.

Curiously ominous is that silent, dogging chase, commenced without the interchange of a remark, and continued in stealthy silence. When Mr. Miles leaves the avenue presently and plunges by one of the many intersecting paths into the heart of the woods, they follow without a moment's hesitation, as by pre-arranged consent. Urged still by his own passionate, tormenting thoughts he has not slackened pace, but they have quickened their

rate of progression and are slowly but surely gaining.

And still not a word passes between them; but Black Mike, who comes third in Indian file, takes an immense clasp knife from his pocket, opens it with his teeth, and drops it, open as it is, into the pocket of his coat of greasy velvet.

In and out amongst the winding paths, turning and twisting this way and that, and as yet quite unsuspecting of danger, goes Mr. Miles. In and out after him, with ferocious, cold-blooded persistence, follow those two human bloodhounds, biding the time and the opportunity to spring upon their prey.

They have decreased the distance between pursuers and pursued to a few paces ere the latter becomes aware of the former's proximity, and stops suddenly to let them pass.

"Hold up, can't you, fool?" cries Slippery Sam, with well-simulated anger.

Watching with cat-like vigilance his victim's movements he has contrived to stop short at the very instant Mr. Miles discovered he is followed, the result being that Black Mike's huge frame nearly tumbles over that of the smaller man. But for this contretemps it is probable not the faintest suspicion would have been excited; as it is the entomologist steps aside in a little cleared space and grasps that feeble weapon of defence, his butterfly net, with vague alarm.

"Would you be so kind as to tell me the time, sir?" says Slippery Sam, insinuatingly.

Nearer draw the two men, and Mr. Miles's distrust of the position increases.

"I carry no watch," he says. "I should say it is about nine o'clock."

"Do you happen, sir," continues Slippery Sam "to have such a thing as a watch?"

The sentence is not completed. With a sudden spring he has attempted to seize the old gentleman by the throat, but an instinctive and almost involuntary movement interposes the entomologist's novel weapon of defence.

Slippery Sam's fingers are tearing at the gauze, whilst Mr. Miles is proving to auctorial demonstration a fact which might have been inferred from his locomotive powers—namely, that his lungs are in admirable working order.

"Thieves! Murder! Thieves!" he shouts. "Help! Help! Help!"

He has thrown down the net and, slipping aside, has dodged Black Mike's clumsy onset. With an angry snarl Slippery Sam flies at him again, like a terrier at a rat. A brief struggle and they come to the ground together, the assailant uppermost. The outcry is silenced, save that a choking sound is heard, as the poacher's long, lithe fingers compress the entomologist's windpipe.

"Off with the ring, Mike. Quick, quick!"

"Dang him! I can't get 'un off," growls Black Mike, savagely, tugging at the finger on which brilliants are sparkling in the moonlight.

"Cut 'un off, then," suggests slippery Sam, amiably.

The ruffian dives into his pocket for the clasp-knife, and in another second that pleasant suggestion would have been acted upon, but with customary awkwardness he has let go his victim's hand and must secure it once more. And meanwhile, an agile form springs over an intervening bush, and Black Mike sees more fiery stars than ever were visible in a frosty heaven as a sledgehammer blow from a white-handed but by no means puny-armed adversary takes him exactly between the eyes.

Nor does Slippery Sam escape unscathed. Agile as are that astute gentleman's movements in a general way, he is on this occasion taken so much by surprise that ere he can rise to his feet Mostyn Howard's bruised knuckles come in contact with a peculiarly sensitive spot just below the right ear with such marked effect that Slippery Sam rolls over with a groan and lies motionless.

The brief encounter is over. The more powerful villain, scrambling away on all fours, plunges into the wood and disappears. His confederate and their victim are alike left senseless on the ground.

Upon their prostrate forms the crescent moon looks down placidly. Mr. Miles's sombrero has rolled off, carrying with it a magnificent chevelure of waving silvery hair. Mostyn Howard, kneeling upon the soft turf, peers into that upturned, close-shaven face, and his eyes almost start from their sockets with incredulous wonder—as though they saw a ghost.

It is the face of a ghost, the very ghost which appeared to him the night of the raid upon the poachers, and which he then affirmed to be the spirit of a man whom he knew of his own certain knowledge was no longer living.

But he does not waste time in attempting to reconcile impossibilities. His fingers loosen the entomologist's cravat, tear off the immense shirt-collar, and throw open his vest to give him air. Then, lifting the little gentleman in his arms as though he were only an unusually big baby, he strides through the ferns and over the bushes by the way he came until he reaches the avenue.

He does not pause there. His young face, so sweet, and pure and strong always, and now so hopeful and glad, is working with some intense emotion, under the influence of which he feels to possess superhuman strength. And as he marches on with his burden towards the castle he cries ever and again as men cry when they achieve the supreme bliss of life, "Thank God! Thank God!"

Mr. Miles is showing signs of returning animation. His eyes open, he begins to struggle, and finally to kick. Then his preserver lowers him gently to the ground, and, throwing an arm around him, steadies him in the light of the crescent moon.

"Mostyn—my dear boy!"

"Yes, father."

"Thank God! Thank God! Not that a disembodied spirit has become palpable flesh and blood, but that 'A Buried Sin,' the memory of which has haunted and embittered Mostyn Howard's existence, is no sin at all. His father is yet alive."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

The last link is broken.
That bound me to thee,
And the words thou hast spoken
Have rendered me free.

WEARING in his button-hole the tiny bouquet which Lady Dunraven's fingers arranged so deftly, and at the bestowal of which Mr. Miles thought proper to take umbrage in an entirely ridiculous and uncalled-for manner, St. John Darrell has gone in to dinner with his fair companion on his arm.

It is a merry party. Since his engagement to Miss Carew became an accomplished fact Mr. Lord of Malbreckthane has thrown off the weight and gravity of years, assuming a kind of boyish hilarity, whilst surface geniality has played upon the stern visage of his fiancée's mother like sunbeams upon a field of ice.

They give the tone to their guests, gay idlers with whom they have filled Freston Castle for the shooting season, and who are only too glad to foster the spirit of festivity. There may be concealed cares and secret sorrows at the table, but in my lord's circle care and sorrow, when they appear in public, wear mask and domino.

In Lady Clare's ears Mostyn Howard's parting words are sounding still with weary iteration, and her wistful eyes have not ceased to watch vainly for him to enter; but although she is looking more pale than usual she chats with her neighbour (Mr. Brabazon, Darrell's friend) composedly and with a show of interest.

To Blanche Carew, seated at the earl's right hand, comes ever and anon a sad prevision of what her future will be—not simply empty, worthless, and sorrowfully resigned, but a daily crucifixion of her best and holiest emotions.

Yet she plays her part with simulated cheerfulness, and her pure, spirituelle loveliness is radiant with that holy light of self-abnegation which has never left it since Darrell made vainly an appeal against her resolve.

And St. John Darrell, the listless cynic, the blasé man of fashion, whose role for years has been to affect invulnerability alike to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and to the malicious darts of the god of love, talks with the usual languid but epigrammatic smartness, and betrays neither by look nor word how deeply the iron has entered into his soul.

A bankrupt in reputation, in purse, and in affection, he is trying to bring himself to the grand coup by which he may retrieve that he has lost.

All the time that the ball of repartee is being tossed from one to another, although he never fails to catch and return it when it comes his way, his mind is debating the pros and cons of the question—shall he, or shall he not, ask Lady Dunraven to marry him? The pros are many, the cons resolve themselves into this, that he loves Blanche Carew.

What of that? In the first place the girl is penniless, and he is worse than a pauper. In the second, she does not care for him. In the third, she is betrothed to his kinsman, and in less than a month she will be the Countess of Malbreckthane.

Why not accept the situation with the philosophy which would so readily point out its consolations were it submitted to him as that of another man? Here is a young widow whom the gods have provided, his equal in social position, undeniably handsome, immensely rich, desperately enamoured.

"I will take her and be thankful," decides St. John Darrell, with lugubrious ingratitude.

He feels more contented now the decision is made.

"She has really a very pretty wit," he thinks, as he enters upon a gay war of words and finds his challenge accepted with grace and spirit.

Momentarily he grows more reconciled until it falls to him to open the door and bow the ladies from the apartment. Then his eyes and Blanche Carew's chance to meet as she passes, and his determination is undone.

Only a glance, which both try instinctively to render as expressionless as possible, only a glance, but the whole question is reopened. He returns to his seat and drinks a glass or two of wine in apathetic silence.

"I will go away from this accursed place and let the thing rest for awhile, at all events until the wedding is over," is his next resolve.

Yet when he rises to join the women he is conscious that he wavers still, that in his mind there is lurking doubt and indecision whether it would not be wiser and better to trifle no longer with this opportunity. A straw would turn the balance. Music-room, drawing-room, conservatory, form a suite of apartments through which he progresses by easy stages.

Lady Dunraven is in the last, absorbed apparently in the contemplation through the glass door of the crescent moon. Will she find the straw? Will she have tact to drop it into the right scale? The event must prove.

As he joins her he hears the rapid liquid notes of a prelude upon the harp, and Blanche Carew's voice rises, attuned to strange pathos and power. The sound of it does not militate against her rival, for his first thought is that in music Miss Carew and the earl will find a true bond of sympathy and of union.

As he stands and listens the tenderness of the theme takes possession of him, softening his heart towards this beautiful woman at his elbow, who has loved him, not wisely perhaps, but well. It thrills her also to eloquent speechlessness, which almost supplies the straw that is needed.

When he whispers presently that he shall stay at Freston Castle no longer, but has determined at once to go away, the whisper is rather an attempt to evoke an expression of feeling than the announcement of a fact.

It succeeds, but the feeling is not of softness, but of anger. Rightly or wrongly Lady Dunraven considers herself aggrieved. Is it to this his strengthening friendship, his growing confidence, his increasing empressment of manner have tended? Are they to result in—flight?

"I can understand," she says, sharply, "that

to a suppliant suitor the scene of his defeat becomes odious."

She has made a mistake, as she knows the instant the words are spoken, and the knowledge does not correct her acerbity. Dimly she feels that at a critical moment she has flung not a straw but a lump of lead into the scale, and that the wrong one. The tone of the cynic's next sentence, languid, clear cut, disdainfully courteous, confirms the misgiving and increases her rage.

"May I beg you to be more explicit, Lady Dunraven?"

"I am speaking of your penchant for Blanche Carew," she says, doubtfully.

"An imaginary penchant for my kinsman's betrothed wife cannot be the subject of discussion," he replies, still with languid scorn. "We Darrells have perhaps an exaggerated respect for the sanctity of all domestic relationships."

Is it ungenerous of him to fling that gibe at the woman to whom the most sacred of domestic ties have seemed but as bands of flax for his dear sake? Let us pardon him. He had not been ungenerous to one woman had he not loved another so well.

"Even for that of husband and wife?" she asks, significantly.

It is not now rage but desperation which possesses her. If he be in truth going away from Freston Castle it behoves her now that woman's wiles have failed to display the other resources of her armory.

"What do you mean?"

"The Darrells are well named," she cries, mockingly. "They strain at a gnat, but having swallowed it they are ready for the proverbial camel. 'Dare all—dare all'—even the crime of murder."

"Is it a conundrum?" he asks, with a listless affectation of fatuity, which provokes her almost beyond endurance. "If so I never had patience for conundrums, and will give it up. I fail to understand you, Lady Dunraven."

She has thrust her hand into a pocket of her black dress and has drawn from it something wrapped in many folds of tissue paper. One by one she throws them aside until a miniature is revealed. St. John Darrell bending to look at it sees that the portrait is his own.

"Where did you get it?" he cries, sharply.

"I found it amongst the willows at the Witches' Pool. Is your understanding any clearer?"

"A little," he answers, thoughtfully.

"It was easy to connect my 'treasure trove' with that poor woman in the nun-like dress, easy to read in Blanche Carew's face and yours mutual knowledge of some terrible secret, easy to play upon her fears and arrive with more or less certainty at all she knew and all she suspects. Is it necessary that I should be more explicit, Mr. Darrell? Will you understand me now when I say that I hold your life in my hands?"

"I think that I understand perfectly," he replies, with sad and thoughtful gravity.

Lady Dunraven comes a step nearer and lays a hand upon his arm. Her cheek is flushed, her eyes sparkle with anticipatory triumph.

"And you do not fear?" she cries. "You can trust me with your life, can you not, St. John? It was that miserable woman, your wife, who stood between us; the—the—tragedy—which removed her cannot make me love you less. Tell me—"

"Stop!" cries Darrell, firmly; and as he speaks he displaces the hand she has laid upon his arm and lets it fall. "I would not have you say one word, Lady Dunraven, which you may afterwards recall with a feeling of humiliation. We shall never be less than friends, I trust, but we can never be more. One obstacle which stands between us will never be set aside."

"What is it?" she asks, breathlessly.

"My love for another. It is not a new passion, nor a sudden one, it has grown into my existence. I love her with all my heart and soul and strength—hopelessly but enduringly. I can never hope to win her, but no other woman shall ever be my wife."

Her hands are pressed to her side, her face is

ghastly pale; she is almost speechless with love and rage and wounded pride.

"It is—Blanche Carew?" she gasps. "And you dare to tell me this—me, who could put a halter about your neck?"

"If it were so," he answers, with a sad smile. "I should not be afraid. In one way, my friend, I could in your own words trust you with my life. But you are quite mistaken in your suspicions. Until we discovered that poor soul, drowned by her own act probably in the Witches' Pool, I thought she was living still."

The quiet accents, the simple truthfulness of manner, carry instant conviction, and his declaration of confidence touches her. Not an altogether bad woman is Lady Dunraven; she might even become a very good one if she could destroy the sinful, overpowering passion which warps her better nature.

Although that evil passion is rending her now, as evil spirits of old were permitted to rend a demagogue as they came forth and left him in his right mind, her first instinct in crediting his innocence is a generous one.

"I am truly glad to believe it," she commences, eagerly, but the words die upon her lips.

A stir and tumult in the drawing-room have arrested them. Looking from the dimness of the conservatory into the light, they perceive that the earl and two of the elder guests whom St. John left over their wine have entered, and with them Mostyn Howard and a stranger, a gentleman small and spare, attired in irreproachable evening costume, many sizes too large.

His back is towards the conservatory, but Lady Dunraven is gazing at him with dilating eyes, full of a strange, new terror, worse, infinitely worse to bear than the anger and shame which Darrell's recent avowal inspired. She has fallen into the nearest seat, before St. John Darrell, assured at length of the stranger's identity, turns and addresses her with sorrowful, compassionate earnestness.

"Lady Dunraven, there is yet another obstacle."

"I know—I have seen," she cries, and her voice is like a bitter wail of grief. "For the love of Heaven go away, and keep him from me for a few minutes if you can."

CHAPTER XXXV.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

When husbands out a-paddling go,
How is it likely they should know
What their wives may do or say?

He who leaves his wife for pleasure,
Alas! too oft repeats at leisure

FATHER and son, so strangely met after so strange a parting, stand in the shadow of Freston Castle talking eagerly.

"You have not yet told me," says the latter, "how you escaped drowning the night I—I—"

"Knocked me overboard in so unceremonious and unfilial a manner," continues Mr. Miles, with a grim chuckle. "Well, I am a good swimmer, and by accident or design you had sent an oar after me. I chanced to lay hold of it, and I concluded it would be better to commit myself to the mercies of the waves than to shout for assistance from an unnatural child who wanted to brain his own father. I trust you have overgrown that unamiable turn of mind, Mostyn."

"Indeed I have, sir."

"That is right. I soon repented my choice, for I was tossed here and there, buffeted and almost blinded, until I began to think of letting go my friendly oar, and sinking quietly to the bottom. But just then something big and black loomed through the darkness, and I caught hold of a rope and climbed on board a Dutch brig. The sailors thought I was Father Neptune, I fancy, but I soon undeceived them. They landed me at Rotterdam, and as soon as I had written to my bankers and had obtained the necessary funds, I recommenced the roving existence of which I have always been too fond. I thought

the belief you had killed me would be a wholesome lesson to curb your natural impetuosity."

"I think the lesson has been laid to heart. I have very little impetuosity left, father."

"So I should imagine from the way you routed my assailants to-night," says Mr. Miles, drily. "In consideration of that timely exploit I freely forgive the old grievance, Mostyn."

"Thank you, sir."

"But I should like to know what brought you to the spot in the very nick of time. You ought to have been at dinner."

"I—I had left the castle."

"Left the castle?" repeats Mr. Miles. "What do you mean? Has the earl sent you packing for making sheep's eyes at his daughter?"

Mostyn's face flushes hotly.

"I have not so far forgotten what is due to the Lady Clare," he answers, with haughty emphasis.

"Highly! tightly!" cries the little gentleman, cheerfully. "As though you did not pass me in the words the day of the picnic, two young fools looking as madly in love with each other as only young fools can. Why were you leaving Freston Castle? And where did you propose to sleep to-night?"

"At the village inn, sir."

"And have you yet bidden a fond, affectionate farewell to my lord of Malbreckthane, or only to the Lady Clare?"

"I had intended to write to the earl," answers Mostyn, with confusion.

"I thought so," comments his companion, significantly. "Then you must stay a day or two longer, lad, until I can recover from the effects of being garrotted. I know the earl slightly; he will give me house room if the resources of your wardrobe can render my outward man respectable. Take me to your rooms and rig me out in conventional attire. I believe you still have designs upon the life of your poor old father, or you would not keep him standing without collar or cravat in the night air. Let me see—why were you leaving Freston Castle?"

"We will discuss that question later," responds Mostyn, evasively, hurrying forward to escape further cross-examination.

The well-trained servants stare, but offer no comment, as they enter the great hall. Strangers are wont to glance curiously at the trophies of war and of the chase which adorn the walls, at the emblazoned window, at the magnificent organ, but Mr. Miles scarcely vouchsafes a look. Following his guide he is soon seated in Mostyn's sitting-room and refreshing himself with a bumper of claret.

"Now let us dress and go down," he suggests, and Mostyn assents with a feeling of unreality, as though the whole scene were a dream. There are restless vivacity and expectant excitement about the little gentleman which begin to communicate themselves to the younger man.

When father and son have exchanged their disordered costumes for evening dress the latter feels as though something was about to happen. Divers misgivings have afflicted him as to the propriety of introducing Mr. Miles to the earl's presence without first obtaining permission, but the entomologist's vehemence has carried all before it.

Regarding him critically when the ancient coat with the brass buttons, the breeches, and the gaiters are laid aside, and the metamorphosis is complete, Mostyn is glad to note that his father looks like, as Dykes would say, a "real gentleman," and not like a waiter.

"What name, sir?" asks a servant, who, having answered an inquiry as to my lord's whereabouts, has conducted them to the door of the dining-room, and Mostyn, by a look, transmits the question to his companion.

It was not by Mr. Miles that his mother was wooed and won, nor was that the name of the man whose acquaintance he made at the fishing town by the sea.

"Sir Miles Dunraven," answers the little gentleman, quietly.

Then the dream-like feeling grows stronger than ever, for my lord of Malbreckthane has risen from his seat and is shaking the hands of the new-comer with vigorous pumphandle action,

as though he would never let them go. And when Sir Miles, crying out for mercy, frees himself, other old friends crowd round, greeting him by name. Yet Mostyn remembers that in another room beneath that roof there is a fair widow—

The baronet's voice cuts short his reflections; the baronet's next movement, as he slips his hand within Mostyn's arm, impels the latter into a position of equal prominence.

"Gentlemen," says Sir Miles, gaily, "this, my son, was lost and is found. Allow me to present to you Mostyn Dunraven, the heir to my title and estates. He is the only child of a former marriage, the legitimacy of which I have hitherto thought it expedient for private reasons not to proclaim."

Is he dreaming, or is he wide awake? The vigorous pumphandle action, of which he is now the victim, is reassuring on the latter point, although it is a little painful in operation. A jubilant, excited throng—he and his father, the earl, and the earl's guests—troop from the apartment towards the drawing-room. But in the centre of the great hall my lord of Malbreck-thane pauses with sudden thoughtfulness.

"It will be a great shock—a terrible shock," he suggests, doubtfully. "Would it not be better to send for Lady Dunraven?"

"Joy never kills," answers Sir Miles, grimly. "Lead on, my lord. I am impatient to behold my wife—my adored and adoring wife."

"Whose gratification will even exceed ours," cries a distinguished savant, in the innocence of his heart, with honest enthusiasm.

But the remark falls flatly, and one or two people afflicted with a keen sense of humour turn aside their heads to hide a smile.

They have reached the drawing-room, and here a second ovation awaits the great entomologist whom the world had supposed to be dead. The Babel of tongues covers St. John Darrell's approach. Unperceived he joins the group and adds his congratulations to the rest. Sir Miles, noting his careless, unruffled ease, and apparent sincerity, begins to wonder whether the doubts, fears, suspicions, and discoveries of the last few weeks are not a very pretty mare's nest of his own construction.

"Where is my wife?" he cries. But even as he speaks he sees her advancing towards him. In her pale face, in her graceful but dignified bearing, there is no sign of the shrinking, the shame, the guilt, the dismay for which he had been prepared.

Her hands are outstretched in token of welcome, but the welcome is not theatrically overdone. It accords with the relations which have existed from the very first between this husband and wife, neither of whom married for love, and into whose union has entered hitherto neither affection nor unkindness.

Sir Miles begins to entertain unpleasant misgivings as to the figure he will cut presently when, instead of posing as accuser and judge, he may have to confess that in the rôle of jealous husband and amateur detective he has only succeeded in making himself ridiculous.

"You see that I mourned for you," says Lady Dunraven, touching her widow's weeds. "You must excuse me for a few minutes whilst I don more festive attire. Perhaps you will come to me shortly in my own apartments and tell me about your escape from a watery grave."

A slight inclination of the head, and she moves towards the door. St. John Darrell opens it, and Sir Miles watches eagerly that perchance he may intercept a look which may convict them of a secret and sinister understanding, but the cynic's face expresses only courteous respect, and Lady Dunraven's might be carved in white marble.

The baronet is not in a hurry to act upon that invitation to join her, and before he can make up his mind to do so she has returned.

She is clad in a marvellous costume of blue satin, with creamy lace at throat and wrists. Art has concealed the unnatural pallor of her cheeks; her lips are wreathed in smiles. She is wearing the costliest jewels he has presented to her; they enhance her brilliant southern loveliness; she looks beautiful as a houri and

stately as a queen. His heart swells with a glad, proud sense of possession.

He has been asking himself whether he has quite done his wife justice in years gone by. It was not a love-match; he married her because she was fitted, in mind and person, to adorn his home; and having done so, he let her pursue her round of fashionable frivolity, whilst he returned with equal ardour to the scientific pursuits which have made him famous. He can bring no definite charge against her; but for Mrs. Trollope's hints and innuendoes he would never have felt himself aggrieved.

Even if Lady Dunraven has flirted (that is the word) with St. John Darrell, as the duenna asserts, can he blame her for finding sinless pleasure in another man's society, seeing that he persistently denies her his own?

He feels proud of her as with fearless self-possession, although the cynosure of all eyes, she moves across the room and lays a hand lightly and caressingly upon his arm. Most women would have made a scene if a husband supposed to be defunct appeared so suddenly in the flesh, but her manner has been the perfection of well-bred self command.

Has he not been a fool in his neglect—a greater fool in his jealousy? Is there, for an old man like himself, the glorious possibility that now, at the eleventh hour, he may become the greatest fool of all in—his love?

He looks at her wistfully. They are standing near the conservatory, and he draws her gently towards the dimness of it where they may be alone. A slight shudder thrills her, but it is only a momentary sensation. A strange apathetic quietude has taken possession of her since she played her last card, and, doubly losing, nerved herself to conceal the loss.

He turns to her, there, in the dimness, where she had hoped to-night to feel Darrell's kisses on eyes and lips and brow. A foolish, tender smile plays upon the baronet's wrinkled face, a tremulous quaver of longing anxiety alters the tones of his voice.

"Are you glad to see me, my wife?" "Very—very glad," she answers, mechanically.

Then, as he opens his arms to embrace the wife of his bosom, her overstrung nerves give way. Her trembling knees fail her; but for his hasty support she would sink to the floor. Lady Dunraven has fainted.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

OUR EARLY ACTORS.—Mr. Payne Collier, in his "History of the English Stage," says:—There were no regular theatres, or buildings permanently conducted for the purpose of the drama, until after 1575. Miracle-plays were sometimes exhibited in churches and in the halls of corporations, but more frequently upon moveable stages, or scaffolds, erected in the open air. Moral-plays were subsequently performed under nearly similar circumstances, excepting that a practice had grown up, among the nobility and wealthy gentry, of having dramatic entertainments at particular seasons in their own residences. As early as 1465 a company of players had performed at the wedding of a person of the name of Molines, who was nearly related to the Duke of Norfolk, and this we believe is the earliest recorded instance. These plays were sometimes performed by a company of actors retained in the family, and sometimes by itinerant players, who belonged to large towns, or who called themselves the "servants" of the members of the aristocracy. In XIV. Elizabeth an act was passed allowing strolling actors to perform, if licensed by some baron or nobleman of higher degree, but subjecting all others to the penalties inflicted upon vagrants; therefore, although many companies

of players went round the country, and acted as servants of some of the nobility, they had no legislative protection until 1572. It is a singular fact that the earliest known company of players, travelling under the name and patronage of one of the nobility, was that of the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III. Henry VII. had two distinct bodies of "actors of interludes" in his pay, and thenceforward the profession of player became well understood and recognised. In the latter part of the reign of the same monarch the players of the Dukes of Norfolk and Buckingham, and of the Earls of Arundel, Oxford, and Northumberland, performed at court. About this period, and somewhat earlier, we also hear of companies attached to particular places; and in coeval records we read of the players of York, Coventry, Lavenham, Wycombe, Chester, Evesham, Mile-end, Kingston, etc. In the reign of Henry VIII. the gentlemen and singing boys of the Chapel Royal were employed to act plays and interludes before the court; and afterwards the children of Westminster, St. Paul's, and Windsor, under their several masters, are not unfrequently mentioned in the household books of the palace, and in the accounts of the department of the revels. . . . During seasons of festivity a Lord of Misrule was regularly appointed to superintend the sports, and he was separately and liberally remunerated. The example of the court was followed by the courtier, and companies of theatrical retainers in the pay and under the names of particular noblemen became extremely numerous. Religious houses gave them encouragement, and even assisted in the getting up and representation of the performances, especially before the dissolution of the monasteries. In the account book of the Prior of Dunmow, between 1532 and 1536, we find entries of payments to Lords of Misrule there appointed, as well as to the players of the King, and of the Earls of Derby, Exeter, and Sussex. The permanent office of Master of the Revels, for the superintendence of all dramatic performances, was created in 1546.

THE FIRST LONDON THEATRE.—In 1572 the act was passed to restrain the number of itinerant performers. Two years afterwards the Earl of Leicester obtained from Elizabeth a patent, under the great seal, to enable his players to perform comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage plays in any part of the kingdom, with the exception of the metropolis. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen succeeded in excluding the players from the strict boundaries of the city, but they were not able to shut them out of the liberties. . . . Accordingly, in the year after they had obtained the above-mentioned patent, James Burbadge and his fellows took a large house in the precinct of the dissolved monastery of the Black Friars, and converted it into a theatre. This was in 1576, and it is the first time we hear of any building set apart for theatrical representation. Until then the various companies of actors had been obliged to content themselves with churches, halls, with temporary erections in the streets, or with inn-yards, in which they raised a stage, the spectators standing below, or occupying the galleries that surrounded the open space. Just after the same period two other edifices were built for the exhibition of plays in Shoreditch, one of which was called "The Curtain," and the other "The Theatre." Both these are mentioned as in existence and operation in 1577. One or two play-houses were opened about the same time in Southwark; and we know that "The Rose" theatre was standing there not long afterwards. Queen Elizabeth had two separate associations of "Queen's Players." A person who calls himself "a soldier," writing to Secretary Walsingham in 1586, tells him that "every day in the week the players' bills are set up in sundry places of the city;" and after mentioning the actors of the Queen, the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Oxford, etc., he goes on to state that not fewer than 200 persons, thus retained and employed, strutted in their silks about the streets. . . . It was not until after a fatal exhibition of bear-baiting at Paris Garden, upon Sunday, 13th June, 1593, when many persons

were killed and wounded by the falling of a scaffold, that the practice of playing, as well as of bear-baiting, on Sunday was at all generally checked. At this period and afterwards plays were not unfrequently played at court on Sunday.

THE ADELPHI AND THE BROTHERS ADAM.—On the third March, 1792, died Robert Adam, Esq. He was born at Kirkcaldy, in Fifeshire, in 1728, educated at the University of Edinburgh, devoted himself to architecture, went to Italy to study its ancient remains, became proficient in his profession, and rose to its highest honours. In conjunction with his brother, James Adam, who died 20th November, 1794, he built some of the finest of our modern mansions, but the work for which the Adams are chiefly celebrated is the elegant range of buildings called the Adelphi, in the Strand, London. Hence also Adam Street, Adelphi, and the word Adelphi (meaning brothers) was given in compliment to the Brothers Adam, the architects.

A FRENCH FÊTE.—There is a curious survival of ancient customs in the capital of the Ariege, France, the local fête which takes place in the month of October preserving many of the features which characterised it during the middle ages. The whole of the town takes part in it, and dancing in the open air begins at one in the afternoon, and with an interval of a couple of hours for dinner, lasts till daybreak the next morning. The spacious promenade of the town is transformed into a ball-room, and magnificently illuminated, and upon the eminence above it is a military band. The dancers are divided into three separate groups—to the right the grisettes, in the centre the peasants, and to the left the ladies—the characteristic part of the fête being that all classes of the community are expected to take part in it. Occasionally a thunder-storm bursts over the town, but unless the rain is heavy the dancing is not interrupted; and it is amusing to see a quadrille or a waltz being gone through under the protection of a forest of umbrellas.

AN INJURED WOMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Double Engagement," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN'S HONOUR.

Hear me while I invoke
The spirit of some monument to attest
In the great eye of love-approving Heaven
We are each other's.

COMING out of a deep sleep, the invalid opened his eyes and looked around. Ignorant of where he was, unconscious how he came there, Colonel Blane returned to consciousness and found Rhoda sitting by his side with her eyes cast down in deep thought. He was not troubled with the ordinary hallucination attending such a surprise, and did not think it was a dream, for all was too real, the feeling of true wakefulness too strong, and the fair form before him too well defined.

That he had been unwell he knew, but the nature of his illness or injuries he did not trouble himself about. It was enough for him that he was in the presence of the woman who had charmed him from the first, who had haunted him in his day dreams and followed him in the misty path of night visions, and whom he had learnt to love while he fought against love. Struggling against captivity, Cupid's garland had yet been strong enough to lead him into bondage.

He lay still. Not that he feared the entrancing sight would be dispelled by a movement, but he instinctively felt that she was there believing he would remain for the time at least ignorant of her presence, and would probably leave him as soon as she saw that he was able to recognise her. The feeling was instinctive, and therefore a true one. Rhoda had no design

to stay longer than was necessary, and she had no thought of winning his heart or that of any living man.

So he lay still and feasted his eyes upon the wondrous face, and saw more in it than he had ever seen before. There was a subtle charm in every feature, and a light inexpressibly beautiful over the whole that hallowed sorrow and lifted her up in his eyes above all common clay.

But his time of blissful contemplation was soon cut short. Rhoda awoke from her dream, saw his fixed, admiring gaze, and drew back alarmed.

"You are better?" she said.

"Much better," he replied, "or rather I must suppose so. Have I been ill?"

"You have been terribly injured," was her answer.

"How and where? Stay, I remember—the lane—that fellow—yes, it is all clear, except the knowledge of where I am."

"You are at Powerscourt; they were obliged to bring you here, or you would have died."

"So," he said, thoughtfully, "and to your kindness I am indebted for my life."

"I only did what another would have done," Rhoda answered.

"You shall not rob yourself of my gratitude," he said. "So when they brought me to your house you played the Good Samaritan. Who found me?"

The question brought the colour to her cheek with startling quickness. What answer was she to give him now? What would he think if she told the truth?

"I—I found you," Rhoda said, hesitating. Then with woman's tact took refuge in the doctor's orders for him to be kept quiet. "But you must not talk. It is against the orders of Dr. Lawson."

"The village surgeon, I presume," the colonel said.

Rhoda bowed and implored silence with her outspread hands.

"Oh, indeed, I am strong enough to talk a little," the colonel said, "and I must ask you to conspire with me against the doctor. In addition to giving me shelter you also fill the wearisome post of a sick man's nurse."

"Doctor Lawson thought that Mrs. Playton would be a little too rough, though meaning well, and so, as I could find no better nurse for you, I volunteered."

"A better nurse," murmured the colonel, "impossible."

"You must not pay me compliments and you must not talk," said Rhoda, with a smile, as she stood up to arrange his pillow.

He took her hand between his, touched it lightly with his lips, and let it go without further demonstration.

"Henceforth," he said, "you will be my good angel. I have needed one any time these fifteen years."

Rhoda shook her head and again reminded him of the doctor's orders, and he promised to obey them. Rhoda was about to leave the room when he broke them again.

"Why are you going?" he asked.

"Now that you are awake," she replied, "Mrs. Playton can attend to you."

"And who is Mrs. Playton?"

"The housekeeper."

"A very estimable woman, no doubt, but at the least a very poor substitute for you. But I cannot hope to keep you here. You will come again?"

"Yes, if you promise me one thing."

"I will promise it if I can."

"You are to speak to me as a nurse, and not talk of me as a good angel, for indeed, I assure you, it pains me."

"I will not call you so again for awhile," he said, "I will only think it. You are sure you are not going to leave me for good?"

"I will come again if Doctor Lawson thinks it necessary," Rhoda said.

Mrs. Playton appeared in Rhoda's place, and although she was a kind woman, with a very hearty, wholesome appearance, Colonel Blane was sure he had never seen a woman so repulsive. He almost hated her, and but for her

maternal kindness would have given her an insight into his feelings.

The doctor came in before dinner, and while he was there Mrs. Playton absented herself. An examination of the patient proved satisfactory, with one little exception.

"You are progressing, colonel," the doctor said, "but there is a slight symptom of fever. You must not allow yourself to be made restless by thinking, and if you are in a hurry to get away from here—"

"My dear doctor, I am nothing of the sort—not on my own account, at all events. I suppose the people at Strathlone know of my mishap?"

"So it was a mishap, eh, colonel?"

"In a way it was. I don't think I could blame anybody."

"I am glad to hear it, colonel, for I was afraid there was something wrong. About the people at Strathlone. Yes, they have heard it; I took the message myself, and Lady Clara was anxious to have you removed at once from here."

"As a matter of fact can I be removed?"

"Certainly not, for a week at the very least, and you must progress wonderfully to do it even then. Your constitution is a sound one."

"Doctor, I assure you I shall not be able to leave here at the end of a week."

"Well, well, we shall see; but you have talked enough now."

"One word more. Mrs. Playton is a very kind woman, but—I think I want a little more congenial society. You might spend a little time with me."

"I intended to do so, and the mistress of Powerscourt shall take her turn."

"You promise me that?"

"I do."

"Then, doctor, I shall get on," said the colonel, with a sigh of intense satisfaction. "But I shall not be well in a week—no, not in a week."

"Nor in a year," thought the doctor, but he did not say so. He was beginning to see how the cat jumped in various quarters. But a love affair was no business of his; he preferred a case of broken bones and bruises.

Doctor Lawson kept his word about Rhoda, and towards evening, the colonel being again asleep, Rhoda took up her post by his side with a small reading lamp and a book upon a small table. The lamp was so placed that the face of the sleeper was thrown into a deep shadow, and Rhoda read on for awhile without disturbing him.

Twice he murmured in his sleep, and each time something about "a good angel" reached her ear. Each time it brought a flush to her face, but it was the flush of pain and not of pleasure.

The tiny bell of a marble clock upon the mantelpiece faintly sounded the hour of ten, and Rhoda closed her book. She had read enough for that night, and stood up to turn the lamp down.

In the act of doing this she raised her eyes to the window that opened upon the terrace and saw—a face. And such a face, so distorted with hatred that she failed to recognise it, and a scream came to her lips. But even in that moment of terror she thought of the injured man and forced back the cry.

It was the face of a woman—that much she could see—and the features were not entirely strange to her, but they were so distorted with passion that she failed to fully recognise them. Something was gleaming below, and Rhoda's eyes, for a moment glancing down, saw that the intruder had a pistol in her right hand.

The barrel gleamed as it was slowly raised and levelled at her. Still Rhoda uttered no cry, mainly because she was now tongue-tied. Who was this woman? And what did she want there? Was it her life or his she was seeking? These thoughts came and went like the lightning's flash, and the next instant the woman and the weapon were gone.

Rhoda had an indistinct idea of having seen a man's hand grasp the arm that held the weapon and draw the woman back, but her mind was so troubled that she was not clear upon it. At any rate the midnight spy was gone, and

nerving herself she walked to the mantelpiece and quietly rang the bell.

"Ask Doctor Lawson to come here at once," she said to the servant who responded.

He had heard the bell and was already on his way thither. The message was only just delivered when he entered the room.

A glance at his patient told him that all was well there, and he turned to Rhoda, whose face was now deadly white. The reaction was almost too much for her, and she was on the verge of fainting, but she beat down the weakness and rallied.

"Why did you ring?" he asked.

"There was a woman outside armed with a pistol," Rhoda replied.

"Outside! Where? By the window?"

"Yes."

"Surely you must have been dreaming. Have you slept at all?"

"No. I was reading at the time. There is the book—the History of Rome, not exactly a ghost-raising work. I saw her there, and she was aiming at me, when somebody pulled her away."

"Are you afraid to be left alone," he asked, "only for a few minutes?"

"Not at all," Rhoda replied. "The danger, if danger there was, I believe to be over."

He opened the window and stepped out. There was light enough to see across the terrace towards the lodge, and two figures, a man and a woman, were dimly visible.

He hurried after them, keeping as much in the shade as possible, and on reaching the lodge saw them again hastening towards Strathlone.

Turning back with knitted brows he retraced his steps to the sick room in Powerscourt, where Rhoda, entirely recovered from her fright, was awaiting him.

"I have discovered who it was," he said, "and it is only a poor, demented woman well known in the neighbourhood. I will take care she does not annoy you again. The weapon she carries is quite harmless."

"It was stupid of me to be so frightened," Rhoda returned. "I shall know better next time."

The patient now awoke, more collected, and visibly better than he had been before. He smiled at Rhoda, and turning to the doctor, said:

"You are Doctor Lawson, I presume?"

A bow answered him, and he tendered his grateful thanks for the services rendered him.

"I judge from your bandages," he said, "that you have been in the army."

"I was with the thirty-fifth in India for five years," the doctor replied, "but I must enforce silence upon you."

"For how long?"

"Two or three days. You may speak a little now and then, of course, but only a few words at a time."

"And after that?"

"You may talk as much as you please."

"I will obey you," the colonel said, "only you must not take away my good angel. It is her presence that is working a miraculous cure."

Dr. Lawson did not ask who his good angel was, as he thoroughly understood him, but the pained expression in Rhoda's face puzzled him. He was at fault, being unable to form a diagnosis of her case, as his first theory had been completely upset.

"I thought she was in love with him," was his mental comment, as he adjourned to the smoking-room to enjoy a cigar. "She was so distressed on his account. But who can understand a woman? The Sphinx is an open book to the mystery of their nature."

While he smoked he thought and formed a plan which he resolved to carry out on the morrow. It was necessary that both his patient and nurse should be protected from midnight intruders, and he resolved to put a check upon one, be the cost what it might.

"Confound the woman," he muttered. "I saw she was in a boiling rage, but I had no idea she was murderous."

Having finished his cigar he went to take a

last look at the patient for the night. Mrs. Playton had taken Rhoda's place, an inflection the colonel was enduring with a stoicism that promised well for his general obedience to the doctor.

"I wished her to go to rest," he whispered in the doctor's ear. "The pretty flower must not be destroyed for the sake of a worn-out old weed like me."

"All right, colonel," said the doctor, cheerily. "I see I have a patient who will do me credit. I shall call early on my way out."

A few plain directions were given to the housekeeper, and the doctor left the patient to his long night, for long it necessarily was, although some short sleeps materially reduced it. As early as nine o'clock the doctor was there again and saw nothing to cause him any anxiety. Rhoda was again by the bedside.

"I could not leave him in better hands," he said. "You will not see me again until the afternoon."

From Powerscourt he went straight to Strathlone, and sent up his card to Lady Clara with a message asking to see her at once alone. Lady Clara sent word down that she was not able to comply with his request, and a second message was sent to her to the effect that the doctor's business admitted of no delay. Then he was shown into an ante-room, and Lady Clara in morning dress, with a dark, frowning face, came to meet him.

"You are very importunate," she said.

"It is a matter of great importance that brought me here," the doctor replied. "You were at Powerscourt last night."

"How dare you insinuate such a thing?"

"I do not insinuate, Lady Clara. I assert. I saw you, and I tell you that such pranks must not be played."

She stared haughtily at him, but he was not at all abashed. His stern sense of duty lifted him up above all fear of the haughty aristocrat.

"Doctor Lawson, have you taken leave of your senses?" Lady Clara asked.

"I might have put that question to you, but in my case it would have been rudeness," he replied. "Pray understand me. Duty commands me to do what I am doing. If you come again to Powerscourt armed I must appeal to the law. I do not know that I am right in overlooking what has taken place."

"But you would not dare—"

"Lady Clara," said the doctor, as he drew on his gloves, "in the cause of right I would dare anything. You ought to know that this is no despotic country. The highest cannot offend against the law with impunity."

"I will ruin you," said Lady Clara, in a low tone of concentrated passion.

"Very good," was the stern reply. "Do it, and I think I shall still be happier than you are."

"What makes all you men so mad as to take up the cause of this creature?" said Lady Clara, with a gesture of anger. "All—all are for her, while I have not a friend."

"Live to earn them, and they will come fast enough," the doctor replied. "I regret having to take upon myself such an office, but duty, Lady Clara, admitted of no other course. I have the honour to bid you good morning."

And bowing in his best manner, Dr. Lawson took leave of the angry woman, who was thenceforth his bitterest foe.

CHAPTER XX.

TWO ROADS TO CHOOSE FROM.

The fiery eye of summer looks o'er the meads,
And like my eyes show warmth. My fancy seeks thee
In all places. But soon, my love, must not
Seek to efface thee from my memory;
The recollection of my love, my ardent constancy.

COLONEL BERESFORD BLANE rapidly fought through the more dangerous symptoms, and within a week was on the high road to convalescence. He obtained the doctor's sanction to leave his couch and lie by the window upon a couch. The weather was warm and fine.

Nature was in her richest garb, and the view from the windows of Powerscourt could not fail to please the lover of the beautiful. To the injured man, so lately hovering around the black valley of Death, it was entrancing.

But the landscape, pleasing as it was, soon lost its hold upon his thoughts. The more magical power of love laid hold of him, and he turned his mind and heart to Rhoda. During the past two days she had scarcely been near him, only looking in at intervals to see if he had all his wants supplied, exchanging a few words, and retiring.

This did not please the handsome colonel. Rhoda had endeared herself more to him than woman had ever done before, and as a natural result he thirsted for her society, which she kept from him. There was a great want in his heart unsatisfied.

It was then about the hour of eleven when he saw her ride down the avenue followed by a groom. He had seen perfect horsewomen in his time, but never one with a prettier figure or a more graceful carriage. In her riding habit, that most becoming of all women's apparel, she was undeniably charming.

She disappeared, and he watched that avenue for an hour and a half before she returned. Doctor Lawson, on his old-fashioned cob, accompanied her, and they rode together up to the terrace near the window where he was lying, dismounted, and came in to see him.

"I hear nothing but good reports of you," the doctor said, "and ere long you will be spreading your wings and flying away. They are longing for you at Strathlone."

"I am not going back to Strathlone," said Sir Beresford, with a slight frown. "I have already trespassed too much upon their hospitality."

"They do not appear to think so," the doctor said. "Lord Revaine has expressed great anxiety for your return."

"I can appease his anxiety without going thither," said Sir Beresford, with a grim smile. "So you think I am so much better?"

"I do."

"Perhaps I am, but I am not so strong this morning as I hoped to be."

He was glad to see Rhoda turn upon him an anxious look, but Doctor Lawson only smiled.

"You are getting on," he said, "and a little more careful nursing will put you on your legs again."

The doctor was invited to stay to luncheon, and accepted the invitation. His patients, he remarked, had fallen off in number with the fine weather, which was the ruin of his profession.

"But I don't care," he added, with a sly smile. "The winter will soon be here with its train of coughs and colds and little ills."

He and Rhoda lunched together, and their conversation turned, as it always did, upon the patient. Rhoda asked if there were any grounds for fear about Sir Beresford having left his couch too soon.

"I think not," the doctor said.

"But he appears to have doubts himself. He was rather restless, it struck me."

"So he is, but it is solely because he wants more of one thing."

"What is that?" asked Rhoda.

"Cheerful society, madame," replied the doctor, "cheerful society. He is a man who has been accustomed to it all his life and misses it without a doubt."

The face of the doctor was one of the most innocent in expression just then. It was impossible to entertain the idea of his having a little plot to carry out, but it was nevertheless true. He disliked Lady Clara, and he admired Rhoda, and the aspiration of the former to marry Sir Beresford was perfectly clear to him.

That aspiration he was determined should not be gratified, and if he had no other reason for bringing Rhoda into closer communion with his patient he would have done it.

But he had other reasons. He did not believe that Rhoda was what the world called her, in spite of all the evidence and common sense being against her. Doctor Lawson had lived long enough to know that appearances are very often misleading, and he refused to accept mere circumstantial evidence in Rhoda's case.

"The girl is good in the main," he said to himself, "and if she has sinned the fault is not hers."

There was another question he had to settle, and that could be done more openly. He wanted to know how the injuries to Sir Beresford were really inflicted, and if done by deliberate malice what steps were to be taken. This could be done at once, and he put the matter direct before he left that day.

"Was it an accident?" he asked.

"It was mainly a matter of obstinacy on my part," Sir Beresford replied. "I was asked to get out of the way and I would not, so the fellow tried to ride over me, and fairly succeeded."

"The fellow was the agent here, Mr. Ardent?"

"I believe so."

"The murderous scoundrel."

"I do not think him so," Sir Beresford said, "for I am inclined to think he had a very honest face. It was a little matter of secret grudge between us, and I forgive him."

"You will do nothing?"

"Nothing, unless it was to shake him by the hand if I met him to-morrow; I would also heartily thank him."

"Isn't it an uncommon thing to be thankful for having received a wilful and deliberate injury?"

Sir Beresford smiled, and lifted his dark, thoughtful eyes to the doctor's face.

"I suppose so," he said, "but it all depends upon what follows the injury. I do not think I am inconsistent in being grateful to Mr. Ardent."

"You know best, of course," said the doctor, "but I think I should prosecute the fellow. Having once done wrong with impunity he may try it on again, especially if—"

"If what, my dear doctor?"

"Nothing—nothing, a mere idea, that is all."

Again Sir Beresford smiled. He made a shrewd guess that the doctor was interested in him in more ways than one; but he owed him more than he thought.

Rhoda thought of the cheerful society which was so imperative to her guest, and being unable to provide any from outside did her best to represent it.

During the next three or four days she spent much of her time in sitting by his couch talking and reading to him.

It was not easy to mistake what his speaking eyes were saying, and the knowledge that he loved her grew stronger every hour. Her own feelings she would not analyse. The work would be too dangerous.

Love must wait awhile for her, if indeed it did not wait entirely in vain. But it was running a risk to spend so much time with the handsome Sir Beresford, the youngest and most fascinating colonel in the service.

He grew strong rapidly, and walked abroad a little in the morning upon the terrace. On the first occasion of his going out Rhoda accompanied him, but the second morning she was away. He reproached her gently for neglecting him when she came to him in the afternoon.

"I have learnt so to rely upon my nurse," he said, "that I am but a poor cripple without her."

"You are so much better," Rhoda urged.

"As I grow stronger the more I shall miss you."

Dangerous ground! Rhoda sought to turn from it, but he resisted. He took her hand in his and raised it to his lips.

"Will you pity a lone man?" he asked. "One who has hitherto known a loveless life?"

"I beseech you, Sir Beresford, to say no more," Rhoda implored.

"I know that I am outraging what the world calls decorum," he rejoined, his eyes flashing with the burning love within, "but I speak now lest the opportunity should go by for ever. I can no more keep pouring out my soul to you than the bird can hold its song from its mate. My lips obey the overwhelming direction of my heart."

"I am sorry to hear you talk thus," Rhoda said, with quivering lips, "but believe me you can never be more to me than you are at the present moment."

"And what am I now to you?" he asked, stooping down and looking into her eyes.

"A friend," she murmured, after a pause.

"Nothing more?"

"You can never be more. It is not right or just of me to allow you to go further. I would not wrong you by giving you my love. I am alone here, without a friend. Have mercy upon me."

"May Heaven punish me as the direst scoundrel if I do not respect your every wish," he said. "It is no sin to ask for woman's love—to offer her an honourable name, the devotion of a life—"

"No, but it would be a sin for a woman with a dishonoured name to put a blot upon yours. You know I do not belong to those with whom you have associated all your life."

"What of that? Hear me, Rhoda—may I call you Rhoda?"

"I am known as Rhoda, mistress of Powerscourt," she said.

"I may call you Rhoda, then," he answered.

"You speak of those with whom I have associated all my life. Who are they? Not only the few around here, but the well-born and noble all over the world. Who beyond here would know a word of the malicious whisperings of the world?"

"You must not tempt me," Rhoda said, endeavouring to draw her hand away, but he held it fast and went on, with the hot blood mantling in his cheeks and his lips quivering.

"I tell you," he said, "that away from here I can give you a position worthy of you, and that position I will labour to make sweeter by my untiring love. If you cannot say yes to my heart's appeal, withhold the no. Take time, try me, try my love—how you will—so that you bid me not wait too long."

"You talk now as if our happiness would be assured," said Rhoda, sadly. "But suppose I listened to you and afterwards I was dragged down from the pinnacle you set me on by my enemies? You must fall with me."

"I will accept whatever befalls me," he replied. "I will risk everything, if indeed risk there be. You shall come among my people, mix with the proudest, nay, stand in the presence of royalty itself. We will defy our enemies together."

"All your promises have no great allurements for me," Rhoda said. "Better that we part now and never meet again than link our lives together."

"You do not hate me?"

"Why should I?"

"Will you say you do not love me?"

"I have not thought of love these many months," Rhoda returned, "nor must I for many months to come. If ever I give you an answer, unless you will take a refusal—"

"That I will not accept now," he said.

"Give me time to think," Rhoda urged, "I must have time."

"How long?"

"A year."

"A year to a man who is beginning to reduce his years. No, Rhoda, it is too long."

"Nine months—six, I cannot say less than six."

"So be it," he said, after a pause. "I owe that much consideration and more. This day six months I will come here for an answer."

"And until then," said Rhoda, "we will meet no more. Let us part now. I leave for London to-night. Make Powerscourt your home as long as you wish."

"Is that a sudden resolve?"

"No, I have purposed going for some time. I have a sister there whom I have neglected of late. I intended going next week, but now that you have spoken as I hoped you never would—for your own sake—I will go to-night."

"As you will," he said, with a sigh, "and this day six months you will be here?"

"Here if I am alive."

He bent once more over her hand, kissed it fervently twice, and let it go, and the next moment he was alone.

Six months! Much might happen in the time to frustrate his dearest wishes, but he felt bound to yield, for he had taken advantage of hospitality extended to him to prosecute his suit, but he had done so as an honourable gentleman.

He was in no uneasiness what the answer would be, but the confidence he felt was not the assurance of a conceited puppy who takes it for granted that a woman is ready to jump at every offer.

It never dawned upon him that he was making a sacrifice for her in offering her his name and all the attendant advantages, and he cared little, for his own sake, what might be said of her afterwards.

He was rich, and could, if he retired from the service, live anywhere, and there were many parts of the world where he would find a home and friends independent of his English circle.

Rhoda came near him no more, and he obediently avoided all chance of seeing her. She left Powerscourt early in the evening to travel by the night mail to London. She took one of the maid-servants with her. The next morning it was known at Strathlone that she was gone.

"What was her motive in leaving him?" asked Lady Clara.

The earl, whom she addressed, thought it was an act of prudence.

"Blane," he said, "is getting better, and she may be anxious to avoid further scandal."

"I am amused when I hear you men talk," Lady Clara returned. "One would think that you believed she was capable of feeling shame."

"I trust no woman is dead to it," the earl said.

"Some in our set are pretty near it," Lord Revaine remarked. "Once that Blane is left to himself I suppose he will soon be returning here. I shall run over and see him this afternoon."

"You will be able to see him often there before long," Lady Clara said. "I mean when he has married that creature."

"That creature" is the prettiest woman in the county," Lord Revaine said, maliciously smiling, "and with Blane to back her up will live down all your sneers. But she is not married to him yet, and I do not think my chance quite gone."

Another family storm being impending, the earl hastily retired, and the brother and sister, left to themselves, had no more to say. When alone they treated each other to silence.

Lord Revaine went over to Powerscourt, obtained what he wanted—a loan of money—and came back with the agreeable intelligence that Sir Beresford Blane did not intend to intrude again upon Strathlone further than to take leave of Lady Clara and the earl.

"He goes to town in a few days," he said, "and Lawson accompanies him."

"We owe his loss to that old man," was Lady Clara's comment upon the tidings.

When Sir Beresford called to bid them adieu Lady Clara was "not at home," but the earl received him kindly, congratulated him upon his recovery, and expressed a hope that they would meet again; and Lord Revaine went with him to the station.

His lordship, idle and dissolute as he undoubtedly was, had some little heart in him, and gratitude for the favours he had received compelled him to say a few words upon a business that he had no right to speak of.

"Don't think me impertinent, Blane," he said, "but I really must congratulate you. You are a fortunate man in winning the mistress of Powerscourt."

"I thank you for a congratulation that deals with an entirely prospective happiness," Sir Beresford drily said, "but suppose such an event as a marriage between us took place, what would you do?"

"Call upon you, stand by you," was the earnest reply.

"You mean it?"



[A TERRIBLE MOMENT.]

"Certainly. I am a dissolute brute, but I won't have anything to do with the crushing of a pretty woman. I tell you frankly that I am awfully spoons on her myself, and if you were out of the way would go in for her. I intended to do so."

"Good bye, Revaine," said Sir Beresford, as the train came rumbling in. "I hope to have the opportunity of taxing your friendship before the year is out."

"You will find me staunch to my word," was the answer.

Doctor Lawson was there, and of him Lord Revaine took a hearty leave also.

"I honour you," the nobleman said. "You have more pluck than many people can boast of. My sister will never forgive you for having defied her."

"I hope to live on, nevertheless," the worthy doctor said, as he took a seat beside Sir Beresford, and with a wave of the hand they parted.

In three days the doctor was back again to take up his practice. He told Lord Revaine that he had left his patient at Ryde, where he was going to amuse himself for a few months with a yacht, a way of killing time that he hoped would fully restore him to health.

Then ensued quiet times at Strathlone and in its neighbourhood. Week after week and month after month went by and Powerscourt was without a mistress. Stephen Crawley, the agent, came down two or three times to see that the place was kept in order and to receive rents and pay wages, maintaining a strict reserve about the movements of his employer. Lady Clara believed her to be with Sir Beresford Blane, married to him in secret, and suffered all the tortures that hatred and jealousy inflict upon those who harbour such evil passions.

Day by day her life grew more embittered, and her heart grew harder. She had been foiled in her first, mad, foolish attempt to take Rhoda's life by Lord Revaine, who had followed her that night, and come up in the nick of time, but the thirst for revenge still had a hold upon her.

"If she should return here with him," she thought, "I cannot tell what I may do."

The autumn came and passed, and winter robbed the earth of its glory. The trees yielded to the chill air and dropped their leaves. Heavy clouds took possession of the sky, and sleet and snow were falling. Work in the fields was abandoned, and the darkest and dreariest time of the year had set in.

The earl and his daughter and son were at Strathlone. The two former had never left it, and the latter had only been away for a month. Some little entertainment was going on in the county, but they took no part in it. The earl was too sad and Lady Clara too bitter to share in ordinary amusement.

Lord Revaine did not care for it. He preferred shooting when it could be got, and failing shooting he indulged in rattling and other of the coarser sports in vogue.

He was often about Powerscourt, where he had made Mrs. Playton's acquaintance, with the hope of getting some information about Rhoda, but he learnt nothing. The housekeeper either would not or could not tell him anything.

One bleak day in December he was coming by the gates of Powerscourt Park. He had been down to the village to see a famous bull-terrier which had come into the possession of the innkeeper there, and he was debating upon the advisability of purchasing it in his then state of funds, which was rather low.

He was riding slowly, and his horse, with a loose rein, was taking its own time to get home, when a closed carriage drove by and turned into the avenue. The old woman who kept the lodge courted as it went by, and he guessed the mistress of Powerscourt had returned.

He asked the old woman if that were the case, and she answered in the affirmative.

"Mr. Crawley," she told him, "telegraphed this morning to say that my lady was coming."

"A short notice," Lord Revaine remarked.

"That doesn't matter, my lord," the old woman said; "everything is ready, and my lady does not give much trouble at any time."

"Why do you speak of her as 'my lady'?" You used to call her 'mistress.'"

"Mr. Crawley said we was to do it, and she is as good a lady as any hereabouts."

"I wish we could all think so," said Lord Revaine, as he gave the old woman half-a-crown.

He took the news home, and dwelt particularly upon that part which referred to a change of title. Lady Clara as usual was furious.

"Will she dare to call herself Lady Sutherland?" she said.

"As a matter of mere daring," Lord Revaine said, "she would do anything, I think. She has plenty of real pluck."

"It will be an indiscreet thing for her to do," the earl remarked, "and I am inclined to think that something ought to be done if she attempt it."

On the morrow there was more news, and this time Lady Clara's maid was the purveyor of it. She too had seen a carriage arrive at Powerscourt as she was going to see her dress-maker in the village, and in it was one occupant, whom she recognised as Sir Beresford Blane.

His visit to Powerscourt was a very short one, for the girl saw him within an hour pass through the village again on his way to the station.

"He was leaning back as if to hide his face," she said, "but Mrs. Grigg thought he was reading something."

All this was maddening to the angry, jealous woman, and the fever within her was increased when Rhoda suddenly left her home again. In three days it was whispered about that she and Sir Beresford were married and were coming to Powerscourt to reside there during the winter, but Lady Clara could gain no definite tidings of them.

"If he has married her," she thought, "she will naturally try to drag him here to flaunt her victory before me; but it shall be short-lived, if I sacrifice my own body and soul in carrying out my just vengeance."

(To be Continued.)



[AFTER LONG ABSENCE.]

CHARLEY GOWEN'S FORTUNE.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO.

MR. CHARLES GOWEN—"Charley Gowen" to those who knew him best—sat in his studio contemplating a canvas, on which was portrayed the figure of a woman in a recumbent position in the snow, with the head leaning wearily against the door of a cottage.

The scene was rural, the outskirts of a village with the light of dawn stealing over the trees that backed up the scattered houses of the straggling street in the distance. It was yet so early that no other form was seen about, nothing but the figure of that woman, and the face of the woman was yet wanting.

It was the face that Charley Gowen was dwelling upon. He knew the sort of face that was wanted, and he knew where such a face was, but there was a difficulty in getting it. Negotiations with the model he required were being carried on by a friend, the result of which he was awaiting.

"I could do it from memory," he muttered, as he brushed his curls petulantly from his brow, "but it would be like all such sketches, weak and wanting in life. Why the deuce could not the woman answer my letter? Five shillings an hour I offered her, and THAT'S good pay, I reckon; I wish I was making it all the year round. Heigho! it is uphill work, and I can't stand another rejection at the academy; it would break my heart."

The door of the studio opened and gave admission to one Anthony Brown, who preferred being called Tony Brown, and whose personal

appearance was a contrast to that of Charley Gowen. Charley was six feet—just turning the inches in fact—Tony was five feet three. Charley was fair, with a lot of sentiment and dash in his handsome face. Tony was dark, with a comical face that made people laugh at times and seasons that were sometimes out of place. Sorrow itself took a comical leaning in the countenance of Tony Brown.

He too was an artist, but having two hundred a year of his own he only painted for "amusement"—for the amusement of his friends it might be said, for they always laughed at his pictures, and with good reason too. He insisted upon going in for sentiment, and his canvas was like his face, it refused to be anything but comical.

With an air of melancholy he came into the room, with his little dark eyes just a shade too close to each other, trying to look as if they never twinkled, and his mouth pursed. Charley glanced at him and impatiently shrugged his shoulders.

"You have failed," he said.

"I have," Tony replied. "Everett has engaged her for his picture of the 'Nun on the Field of Battle,' and she has promised not to lend herself to anything like it."

"But my girl is not a nun," growled Charley. "She thinks it too near. The nun on the field of battle will have to look pale and distressed, so will your girl, for she's dead. It's a good idea, Charley. 'What the father found in the morning'—the poor girl coming back in the night and dying on the doorstep. There's a lot of sentiment in it."

"It will be nothing without the face," said Charley. "What am I to do?"

"Don't know, I'm sure," said Tony, lugubriously shaking his head. "I'm in a fix too. I can't get an old woman for my 'Watchful Mother'—"

"For your WHAT?" asked Charley, cutting in rather savagely.

"'Watchful Mother,'" replied Tony. "Scene in a cottage; Watchful Mother by the window; view of storm at sea without, and a sail coming in. Two sons or perhaps three, who work for their mother, presumably in the boat. Good idea that."

"But you ought to call it by another name, Tony."

"Do you think so? What do you suggest?"

"I should call it the 'Careful Mother.'"

"I don't see that."

"Why, Tony, don't you see how careful she is, sticking in doors during the storm? She's afraid to go down to the beach, for fear of getting wet, and—"

"Oh! come," said Tony, disgusted, "none of your chaff, Charley; but that's the way with you fellows. You have always a bit of fun to poke at my pictures."

"You are a legitimate target for our small shot, old fellow," said Charley; "but confound that model! I must have my picture finished before next week or I shall not get it in. What shall we do?"

"Come out and have a stroll," suggested Tony. "We may think of something."

"Very good," said Charley, tossing his hat carelessly upon his head. "It matters very little what I do for a few hours. I can't work, that's certain."

Charley's studio was in Golden Square, at the very summit of one of its four-storied houses. The house was full of lodgers of a very respectable class, mostly people with a moderately good income who liked living in town, and Charley was the only representative of Bohemia there. He had a great dislike for the ordinary haunts of the brethren of the brush, where as he said it was all beer and tobacco and precious little work.

It was late in the afternoon, and evening was at hand as they reached the square, where quietude as usual was making its influence felt. They had come out for a walk, but had not settled whither to go, and pausing they looked up and down.

"Which way?" asked Charley.

"Any way you please," replied obliging Tony Brown.

Charley with a smile swung upon his heel and moved towards Beak Street, walking easily along with Tony by his side. Tony always smoked in the street, as he believed it to be thought artistic and Bohemian to do so. He filled his pipe and was searching in his pocket for a light when an exclamation from Charley drew his attention to him.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" he asked.

"The face, the very face I want!" replied Charley, excitedly, pointing back.

A girl had just passed, walking with a slow and sad step, and of course Tony could only see her back. Her figure was undoubtedly pliant and graceful.

"The face you want, Charley?"

"The very face!"

"Then why don't you go and ask her to sit? She looks hard up, poor thing."

"So I will, by George!" cried Charley. "Wait here a moment for me."

In half a dozen seconds Charley was by the side of the girl. Raising his hat he bowed and said:

"Pardon me, will you allow me to say a few words to you?"

The girl, who was not more than seventeen, with a pale and sad but marvellous charming face, so sweet and full of expression that it ought to have won the heart of any man, pulled up short and stared at him with mingled anger and dismay.

"Why do you speak to—me?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Not to insult you. I assure you earnestly," Charley said, quietly, "I have no object that is unworthy in speaking to you. I am an artist, and very much in want of a particular kind of face to complete my picture for the academy. Will you sit for me? I will pay you very well."

"Sit for you? Pay me?" she echoed.

"Perhaps you do not understand such things," he said, "but I can assure you that we have many professional models—ladies who are perfectly respectable, and who make a very good thing of it. There is no reason why you should not sit for me."

"Except this one, that I do not know you," the girl replied. "I should really be glad to earn some money if I could, but—"

"Have you no friends, a mother or a sister, who would come with you to my studio?" asked Charley, eagerly; "then there could be no possible harm. I want you to dispel your doubts of me—very natural, but unfounded. I shall want you to sit—say half a dozen hours; two hours at a time for three days, and I will pay you five shillings an hour."

"That would be thirty shillings in all," the girl said.

And her eyes sparkled as if the money would be indeed welcome to her.

"That is so. Thirty solid shillings," Charley replied. "My name is Gowen. I live in that house, two doors up, and if you will say you will come to-morrow I shall be glad."

"I have a mother," the girl said, "but she is very unwell. We are poor, and— Will you come and see her? It is for her to decide."

"May I come now?"

"If you please."

"I shall be delighted."

"And as you have given me your name, I ought in courtesy to give you mine. It is Edith Campbell. My mother is a widow."

"And your father—what was he?"

"A civil engineer. He was killed by the fall of a piece of rock in India. The men under him fired the blasting shot before he gave the order. He had been a struggling man for years when his appointment to a good post came to gladden us. He had only been in it three months when he was killed."

"Poor fellow," said Charley.

They had been walking on while they were talking, Edith Campbell leading the way towards Soho. They had to pass Tony Brown, who put his pipe in his pocket as they went by and took off his hat to Charley in acknowledgment of his

having a lady with him. Edith noticed the act, and asked if they were friends.

"Very old and very firm friends," Charley replied.

"Perhaps you left him to speak to me," Edith said.

"Such is the fact," replied Charley, laughing, "but he knew why I did so."

"Why should he not go with us?"

"If you don't object."

"Oh, indeed, no," said Edith, simply. "Why should I?"

So Tony was beckoned up and introduced just as he was getting his pipe to go again. For the second time he put in into his pocket and endured the agony of a martyr through extinguishing it with his thumb. He was fairly taken aback by Edith's beauty.

"Just like Charley," he thought; "gets all the best models, and of course does the best pictures; but I'll get up something for her to sit for me. What a 'Young Mother' she would make, or a 'Girl he left behind him,' or if I went in for anything angelic she would be prime. Her face ought to be her fortune, but at present it doesn't seem to be."

CHAPTER II.

THE PICTURE.

MRS. CAMPBELL, the widow of the engineer, had fallen upon hard times, made doubly hard to bear by ill health and the anxiety and care of having a pretty daughter who was likely to be left to the scant mercy of the world. After her husband's death she found herself possessed of just two hundred pounds, and having neither friends nor acquaintances in India, she returned to England.

There she had "friends" when she had no need of them, but when she presented herself before them as a widow who wanted a little help these so-called friends fell away. They had no money, no time, no anything but a little general advice to give to the widow, who, in the bitterness of the discovery of the hardness of the world, hid herself away in London and tried to obtain the means of living.

She failed, as a woman of forty, in weak health, and inexperienced, might be expected to do. Nobody wanted her, and she got nothing to do, and her money dwindled down until she had only a few shillings left. Matters were in this state when Edith met with Charley Gowen.

Edith had tried to get work also, but not knowing where to apply, had hitherto failed, and in her wanderings in search of something to do had learnt how dangerous it is to have a pretty face. The insults she had to endure were innumerable. There was not a puppy with whom she came in contact who did not think he had a right to leer in her face, or offering familiar and insulting attention.

Nor were the streets safe for her. She was often followed by the well-dressed idle and vicious men who live to gratify their tastes at the expense of others, and when Charley first spoke to her she put him down as one of the number.

The second glance at his frank face, however, corrected the mistake, and ere her humble lodgings were reached they were talking together like old friends. Tony Brown did not say much, but he glanced frequently at her face and thought a great deal.

Mrs. Campbell occupied two rooms of the second floor of a house where struggling need had set its seal, but it was respectable. The poor did not want to remain poor. They were willing to work and tried to get it to do, success unhappily only crowning the efforts of the few.

Mrs. Campbell sat by the window on an old couch, with pillows propping her up into a sitting position, when Edith entered, followed by two gentlemen. She was amazed, but an explanation was soon given, and it must be confessed she received it rather doubtfully.

"It appears to me to be an odd request," she said.

"So it may, my dear madame," replied Charley, "and only being in such sore strait as I was would have induced me to address your daughter as I did."

"Nothing else, madame," softly murmured Tony Brown, playing the part of chorus.

"If I could attend with her I should not have the least objection," said Mrs. Campbell, after awhile. "But you say your time is short?"

"I have only a week," replied Charley.

"And it cannot be put off?"

"Impossible."

"My health," said Mrs. Campbell, "is not so good as it was—not anything like so good, but I think in about a week—"

"Let me beg of you to trust me," said Charley, his handsome face lighting up with honesty. "You are not afraid to trust your daughter in the streets, extend that trust to my studio. Two hours per day for three days."

"There is another thing," said Mrs. Campbell, still hesitating. "The pay seems to me out of all proportion to the service rendered."

"You think it not enough?"

"On the contrary. I think it too much."

Here both Charley and Tony struck in together and in duet form told her it was the recognised price for a good model, and no artist with a spark of generosity in his nature could think of offering less. Then they launched out into a statement of "model" life, praising them who pursued it, and by degrees won over Mrs. Campbell to their views.

"I must admit," she said, "that the money will be welcome to us."

"And Miss Campbell will more than repay me," Charley replied.

"I also am painting a picture," Tony put in. "The subject is something similar to my friend's, and I also shall be glad of Miss Campbell's services. But I shan't clash with you Charley," he added, hastily, "as I shall not exhibit this year."

"I don't think you will," Charley quietly remarked.

They won the day, and it was arranged that Edith should sit on the morrow, and the two friends departed highly satisfied with what had taken place.

"If," said Charley, "I can only get that face on canvas my picture is made."

"You will never do it," said Tony, mournfully.

"Why not?"

"No man could paint it. No brush do justice to it."

"What," cried Charley, giving him a gentle dig in the ribs. "Tony, the impregnable, carried by assault. Tony, the woman-hater, in the toils of Cupid."

"I never was a woman-hater," Tony averred. "Oh, yes, you were," insisted Charley. "Do you remember that girl at the stall in the Crystal Palace—"

"Don't speak of her in the same breath with Edith Campbell," said Tony, indignantly. "I wonder at you. And spoons on her yourself too."

"My dear fellow," said Charley, slowly and impressively, "I am nothing of the sort. I should be an ass to get spoony on a woman. To be in love would be to unsettle my mind, and how with an unsettled mind is a man to make his way as an artist? Unless I make my way I cannot marry. Ergo, I am not in love."

"All very well to talk," grumbled Tony, "but you were both making eyes at each other—"

"Tony!"

"So you were, and neither of you took the least notice of me. A precious nice walk I had to be sure."

"Tony, old fellow," said Charley, earnestly, "I am in love, but it is with art. I view the sweet face of Edith from an art point of view. Outside of art I have no sentiment. Go and win Edith if you can."

"You mean that?"

"I do."

"Very good," said Tony, breathing deeply, and the rest of the journey home he performed in silence.

The next morning Edith came and sat.

Charley and his friend were both there, and while Charley painted Tony read. There was a little talking, but not much, and at the end of the sitting the face was well upon the canvas, outlined with the ground colour put in.

"You must allow me to escort you home, Miss Campbell," Charley said, slipping behind a screen and rapidly changing his coat. "I am going that way."

"We are both going," said Tony Brown, closing his book, "and if Miss Campbell will endure me—"

"You are both very kind," said Edith, smiling, "but I do not think I ought to trouble you."

"It is a fortunate chance that takes us both the same way," Charley rejoined, "and I hope you will allow me to accompany you."

A walk, very much like that of the day before, was the result, and a second visit was paid to Mrs. Campbell, who appeared to be so much better that she thought she would be able to accompany Edith on the morrow.

"Anxiety has been keeping mamma down," Edith said, "but now that I am earning such vast sums of money she is getting quite well again."

"I am sincerely glad to hear it," said Charley, and Tony offered rather a gloomy congratulation. For one who had been in a way appointed to the post of lover he was kept very much in the background. He thought it very unkind of Charley, and resolved to speak his mind on his way home.

This he did, and of course Charley laughed at him.

"I don't keep you back," he said; "you do it yourself. Why don't you come forward and make yourself appreciated?"

"Then you will turn up rough."

"Not a bit of it."

"Very good," Tony said. "I will come out strong to-morrow."

Alas for to-morrow we all talk so much about. We will do this and that, mend our ways, make up that quarrel with our friend, begin a new life, lay the foundation of a fortune, and all sorts of steps are to be taken, not to-day but to-morrow. And yet we all know that "to-morrow" never comes.

CHAPTER III.

SUCCESS.

"DEAR MR. GOWEN,—I regret very much to tell you that our acquaintance must for the present terminate. It has been a pleasant one, though brief, and with no mere ordinary courtesy I express myself when I tell you that I hope one day to have the pleasure of meeting you again. My daughter will not be able to complete her sittings, which is a matter of regret, I might also say annoyance to her, but it is imperative that we leave here at once. After you went away yesterday circumstances arose to call us from London. When this reaches you we shall be two hundred miles away. Edith joins with me in being your well-wisher. Yours sincerely, "HELEN CAMPBELL."

Charles Gowen read the above epistle carefully through, turned it upside down, looked at it steadily, righted it, and read it through once more with an expression of face that might be called painful.

"Pleasant," he muttered, "but just my luck. I may search the town over and not find another to take her place. It is a face of a million."

He sat close before his easel, filled his pipe, and began to smoke gloomily with his eyes upon the unfinished picture. There was enough of the face to tell it was Edith and that was all.

"Just as she might be seen in a fog," he muttered, "but that won't do for the public. Ah! I hear Tony's footstep on the stairs. What a comfort it is to think he will be floored too."

Mr. Anthony Brown put in an appearance that showed the high spirits he was in. He had garnished the whole man a little more than usual, parted his hair down the middle (the

most unbecoming way he could wear it), and carried a pair of new dogskin gloves in his hand. Mr. Charles Gowen in a bitter state of mind eyed him with gloomy disdain.

"Are you going to show in the Row?" he asked.

"No," Tony replied; "but I thought I would show Miss Campbell—the gentle, lovely Edith, I will, in her absence, call her—that we men of Bohemia can dress when we like."

"Oh, that's what you thought. And you think your get-up a success?"

"Well, isn't it?" asked Tony, trying to get a view of his back. "Need any woman be ashamed to be seen with me?"

"No woman with any sense need be ashamed of it at any time."

"Thank you. But how do you like my get-up?"

"You look like a house half painted and the work stopped for want of funds."

"Thank you, I'm sure. What's wanted about me?"

"Oh, not much," said Charley, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "I'm a little put out, that's all."

"Don't be that," said Tony. "By the way, I've thought of a capital subject for my next picture."

"Have you?"

"I have. 'The Young Girl's Dream,' that's the idea. Scene: A small room with antique furniture; time, about five o'clock on a wintry afternoon. Girl asleep before a dying fire, no candle or lamp. Girl with lock of hair in her hand. In the corner of canvas a sea sketch surrounded by a cloud—stormy weather—the wreck of a ship floating about. Idea conveyed: Lover drowned and beautiful girl dreaming about him."

"Ah," said Charley, "it's a good idea—so original. Who's to be your girl?"

"The angel Edith, of course."

"Is she? Read that," and Charley handed him the letter he had received half an hour before.

Mr. Anthony Brown's visage in its normal condition was round and plump, but as he grasped the news conveyed in that strip of paper it gradually lengthened until he became the very ideal of disappointment and dismay.

"Gone!" he cried. "Called away!"

"Just so," said Charley.

"Then what's to become of my picture—of me?"

"My picture is the first consideration, seeing she was engaged for that. I have now either to finish it from memory or let it alone. I think the latter most advisable."

"I could finish it from memory," said Tony, with a sigh. "Ah, what a face it was—what a face!"

"I'll have a shot at it," said Charley, resolutely. "I could never put another in its place. Go away, Tony; leave me for the day and let me do the best while the memory of her is strong upon me."

"Do you think, Charley, you could ever forget her?"

"I—," Charley said, and paused.

He took up a brush and while mixing some colour in his pallet he added:

"I don't know; my memory is not a good one."

"In some things it is good enough."

"Perhaps so, Tony, but go away and leave me. Take a walk to Westminster Bridge and pitch that bilious-looking pair of gloves into the river."

"No," replied Tony, "I won't do that. I'll keep them. Miss Campbell might return, and then I should not like to be unprepared."

He went away, and Charley Gowen after a little thought began his work. After the first few strokes of the brush he seemed to be inspired and progressed at a great rate, the face growing out of the canvas with great rapidity. He let the hours slip by unwinded, neither ate, drank, nor smoked, but gave his whole mind to the work before him. Late in the afternoon his friend returned and found him still actively engaged.

"How are you getting on?" he asked, as he closed the door.

"Come and see," was the answer.

Tony advanced, looked at the canvas, and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"It's life-like," he cried, "it is perfect."

"Not perfect," the artist said, "no touch of man can put so much soul into the face as Edith had, but it is passable."

"You have excelled yourself," said Tony, "you will be accepted at the academy this year."

"If I fail this time I will try them no more."

He had yet six days in hand, and he spent all his spare time in touching up the face, and under his hand it grew more life-like every day. Tony Brown was in raptures, and thanked him over and over again for having done justice to "his Edith," at which Charley smiled a little grimly.

On sending-in day the two friends took it down to the academy, left it, and returned to await the result. Charley employed his time in making charcoal sketches, which all turned out to bear some resemblance to the face and form of Edith, and Tony Brown, pending the return of "his Edith," gave himself up to an historical picture, selecting the novel subject of Charles the First parting with his children on the eve of his execution.

"I shall make it ten feet by six feet six," he said, "that will be a good size to hang on the line when I send it in next year. What, another sketch, Charley? That's Edith's back, I'll swear, just as I saw her the first time in the square that morning."

"Until I hear about my picture," Charley said, "she will haunt me."

The answer came in due time—accepted, and the shout of joy Charley gave was heard right down Beak Street, at the top of the square, and up Carnaby Street, that haunt of Irish journey-men tailors.

Tony Brown, who was present, wiped a sympathetic tear from his eye.

"Ah, and if we had known her sooner," he said, "she might have sat for my 'Young Girl's Dream,' and then fortune would have fallen to us both."

The picture was a success, all the critics said so, and the public endorsed their opinion. A well-known connoisseur of pictures, a dealer who bought all he could get of the productions of rising young artists, laid his hand upon it at once and offered fifty guineas down. Charley thought that was not enough for Edith's face, and eventually got a hundred.

He also had a commission to paint two other pictures, for which he was promised a cheque down, and by the end of July this commission was completed and the money in his pocket.

Charley had worked hard and now felt that a little rest would be beneficial to him. Tony also wanted a change, for he had been horribly bothered about that picture of Charles the First, having in the first place painted two children more than the monarch is reputed to have had, and when he had put the number right he fell asleep while sitting at work and slept with his cheek against the fresh paint, daubing himself terribly and completely obliterating the face of the unfortunate king.

"So I will put it aside, Charley," he said, "and have a run down with you. Where shall we go?"

"I was thinking of having a walk about Cumberland," Charley said.

"The very thing, dear boy. Lead on and I will follow."

Accordingly they packed up their knapsacks, put money in their purses, shod their feet with strong, serviceable boots, and set out for the region over which Skiddaw rears his mighty head.

CHAPTER IV.

AGAIN.

THERE is nothing so good as a walking tour to a brain-weary man, if his brain is weary with

work only. It braces, sets him up, freshens his ideas, and in short gives him new life. To Anthony Brown that walk through Cumberland did a world of good, and he was no longer haunted by the smudged face of the martyr king, nor by the mistake he had made by increasing the family of that unfortunate ruler.

But it had not the same effect upon Charles Gowen.

He walked as sturdily as his companion, but he did not thoroughly enjoy his walking, for although he said nothing about his thoughts his mind was perpetually returning to his first academy picture and the fair girl whose face had made and so indirectly laid the foundation of his success.

He knew if he lived that he would be a successful man. Those who did not make a mistake about such things had written so. The dealers were glad to stop and speak with him, and dealers do not forget themselves by wasting time on a man out of whom nothing can be made. So far he had nothing to complain of, but he was not thinking of his success, only of Edith's face.

He was admiring it artistically of course. It was out of all reason for him to be in love, and it was simply the artist's passion glowing within him. Still he did not sigh for the picture, he did not want it back again, and he was not sorry that he had sold it. What he wanted was to meet with Edith and get her to sit again.

"You don't talk so much as you used to do, Charley," said his friend, as they were tramping along a quiet road on the way to Skiddaw, lying like a great cloud in the distance.

"If I don't," Charley replied, "you talk more, and that squares it."

"What are you thinking about?"

"I—oh—art—the painter's art."

"Art doesn't make a man flush and look soft and spoony one moment and grind his teeth the next."

"Well then, if you must know, I've been bothering myself quiet needlessly about Edith Campbell."

"Edith Campbell!" exclaimed Tony. "Who is she?"

"Why, that model who sat once, and—"

"Of course," said Tony, "and to think that I had forgotten her, but I've had Charles the First on the brain. The martyr has made a martyr of me."

"So you have forgotten her," said Charley, with a smile.

"Fact, I assure you, but now you name her I remember, I recall my blighted love. It was a narrow escape, wasn't it?"

"Yes, for her, but let us rest a moment and take a look at the scene."

They sat down upon a quaint stone bridge spanning a turbulent trout stream and looked about them. A wild and charming scene truly, made up of rock and moor and fell, with great hills and purling waters, with houses dotted about.

"That's a nice-looking place," said Tony, pointing to a substantial residence just ahead of them.

"Very," said Charley, absently. "I wonder who lives there."

"Hither comes an humble peasant. Let us inquire of him."

The humble peasant proved to be an English servant, and on being asked whose house it was he simply replied that it belonged to his master, Mr. Allan Campbell.

"A Scotchman," said Tony Brown.

"By extraction," the servant said, "but he has lived all his life in England until within a year or so. He has only just inherited the property."

"And is it large?" asked Tony.

He was a man of property himself, for two hundred a year is property, and was interested in other property holders.

The servant seemed glad of somebody to talk to, and answered readily as at first.

"A large estate, bringing in some seven thousand a year."

"A nice thing for his family," said Charley, joining in.

"He has no family, being a bachelor, but he has adopted his niece, a young lady who was very poor. They say that Miss Edith was almost starving in London."

"What part of London did she live in?" asked Charley Gowen, speaking rapidly.

"I don't remember, sir. I forget the name of the place."

"Was it Soho?"

"To be sure, sir. I remember Mary, that's our first housemaid, saying the letter was directed to her there."

"And was Miss Campbell's father a civil engineer?"

"Yes, sir, killed in India by the fall of a rock."

"And is she to be the heiress of Mr. Allan Campbell?"

"Yes, sir, that's settled."

"He has several thousands a year you say?"

"Between eight and nine thousand."

"Thank you very much. Your information has been most interesting. Here's half-a-crown for you. Tony, come along, we have not a moment to spare."

"But I say, Charley—"

"Come along, I tell you."

And Charley to the amazement of the servant dragged his friend off, walking at racing speed, Tony as he went along sputtering out his protestations. When they got out of sight of the house Charley pulled up and breathed like one who had escaped from some great danger.

"Phew!" he said. "Now, Tony, I think we are all right."

"All wrong I should say," replied Tony, indignantly. "Are you not going to call upon them?"

"Upon whom?"

"The Campbells."

"Not if I know myself. No, my boy, it would be only wasting time and opening up old, old wishes to have her sit again."

"Well, perhaps she would oblige us, Charley, and we should save the usual fee, you know."

"Bah! what bosh you talk. As if she would have anything to do with us."

"You forget what Mrs. Campbell said in her letter to you. She HOPED to see you at some future time."

"Only what was polite and proper."

"Then you won't call?"

"No, Tony, I don't like to rake up old, old art longings, they have troubled me enough as it is."

"All I can say is that you are deuced unpolite and ungrateful," said Tony Brown, settling his knapsack. "You owe the acceptance of your picture to Miss Campbell, for it was the face everybody spoke of, and nobody ever looked at the rest of your canvas, except old Groggins of the 'Daily Squaller,' who said it was scene painting, and he could scarcely believe you did the face. It is your duty to look them up. I think I shall if you don't."

"Oh, do," said Charley, with a savage grin, "and get a pail of water over you for your pains; I am going on. In another hour it will be dark."

"I can't walk much farther to-day," said Tony.

In a little while they reached an inn, and there they halted for the night. Having taken off their knapsacks, enjoyed a wash at the pump, they sat down to dinner, both in a well-satisfied state of mind. Charley was gay and talked merrily until they came to the cigars, when a change came over him—from gay to grave, not to say solemn; and Tony Brown wondered and inquired what was the matter with him.

"Nothing that I can speak of," Charley said. "I was thinking about that fellow who wrote about life not being worth having. He must have known some trouble."

"Oh, no, not he. If he had, Charley, he would have known better than to indulge in such romance. Men with real troubles are generally made better and easier, and they bear them quietly. It is grumbling people, with a lot of little nothings to complain of, who make the most fuss."

"Tony Brown on troubles." There is a deal of truth in what you say. Perhaps the fellow was in love, and had met with disappointment."

"That would make him so, you think?"

"I should think so," Charley said; "I don't know."

He rose up and walked to the window, where the landscape could be seen with the sweet and calm light of evening upon it. There was the long, winding, narrow road that led up to Skiddaw, a track deserted by all save one man, who was plodding his way homeward towards a cottage that stood alone in a field away from the main track. That one living being only made the appearance of the land being deserted complete.

Charley wondered how that man could tolerate his life—labour all day, and that lonely cottage at night; and then it suddenly struck him that he might have an Eve there who made a paradise for him instead of destroying one, and he sighed wearily.

"Idleness," he murmured, "doesn't suit me. I am weary away from art, and to art I must return."

He turned to speak to his friend, but that gentleman, wearied by the heat of the day, was fast asleep in his chair, with a half-smoked cigar between his lips.

"Happy Tony," sighed Charley. "So much sentiment and so little care, while I am all care. Bah! What has come to me? Is not everything going well with me? Am I not the rising artist of whom people speak as the coming man? Am I not ascending the ladder of fame? And when I have reached the top what then? Cur bono? Who will profit by it? For after all it will be but working for self?"

And while he reasoned and talked with himself he shut his eyes to the stern, naked truth. He had been in love with Edith from the first, and that night he was more in love with her than ever.

He knew it was so, and quarrelled with himself for being such a fool. Why had awkward Fate made her rich, and so lifted her out of his reach? If she had remained poor he would have tried to win her, might have won her perhaps, and so he would have something to live for.

It was yet early in the evening, not more than half-past eight o'clock, and he, far from being fatigued with his day's work, was restless. While Tony slept he would go for a stroll, and lighting a second cigar he sallied forth, thinking he would take the lonely road to Skiddaw.

But ere he had covered twenty yards of it he turned back and retraced his way towards the house where Edith was. He was only going that way because it was more pleasant, and he insisted that he had no hope of seeing her. He did not wish it in fact.

"For what good could come of it?" he thought, as he walked on. "For the moment I might be happier, but afterwards what should I feel?"

He reached the gates of the grounds, which stood open and looked in. There was no lodge, and the carriage way wound about with pine trees growing thick on either side. The house from where he stood was invisible, and he wanted to see it again. Why not walk up and peep at it? The gate stood hospitably open, and even if he were detected nobody would take offence.

So he went on in a dreamy mood to his fate.

The way was longer than he expected, and ere long he came to a footpath that promised to be a short cut to the house. There appeared to be less chance of detection by taking that road, and he took it.

It soon proved to be more toilsome than the wide way, but he kept on, persistently trying to convince himself that it was a shorter cut, until a sudden bend brought him to an open glade, with a Swiss summer-house on one side and a sparkling fountain in the centre, and seated by that fountain with a book in her lap, and her hands clasped listlessly before her, was Edith Campbell.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD SONG.

CHARLEY had come up quietly without disturbing the reverie Edith was indulging in, and he had a few moments' leisure to contemplate that face. Ah! yes, it was as beautiful as ever, more beautiful he was sure, and his big, strong heart beat with the tumult of a love that would not be restrained.

He was sure that the most honest and sensible thing for him to do was to go away as softly as he came and never look upon or think of her more, but he could not do it. If death had been the penalty for speaking to her he would have spoken.

"Miss Campbell," he said, softly, "I fear I—"

She looked up with a startled face, sprang to her feet, and gazed at him with a wild terror in her speaking eyes. He hastened to relieve her palpable alarm.

"It is only the artist you knew in town," he said, hurriedly. "I am on a walking tour, and have lighted on this place by accident. I trust you will forgive this intrusion."

Edith drew a deep breath, and the colour that had forsaken her cheeks returned.

"So it is you, Mr. Gowen," she said. "You came so suddenly and quietly upon me that I thought it was your ghost."

"I am thankful to say that I live still," Charley rejoined, with his old smile. "I hope Mrs. Campbell is better."

"She is in excellent health," Edith said. "The air here is very bracing."

And then a sudden silence followed, and both were a little embarrassed. Charley drew nearer to her.

"I hope you know how much good you have done me," he said.

"Indeed I do not," replied Edith. "We are out of the world here, and know little or nothing."

"You have made my fortune."

"I made your fortune, Mr. Gowen? You are jesting."

"Indeed I am not. The one sitting you gave me proved after all to be sufficient."

"I am glad to hear it, but I do not see how THAT could have made your fortune."

"I wish I could speak plainly without being liable to be charged with gross flattery," Charley said. "What I want to say is only the truth."

"The truth ought never to be unwelcome," Edith said.

"It was your face that won me applause," Charley said, dropping his voice. "It inspired me first, and delighted the art world afterwards—"

"I came out well from an art point of view," said Edith, with a little heightened colour. "I can only say that I rejoice to hear it. I regretted very much cutting short my sittings, but my Uncle Allan was imperative. He had found us out and would take us away with him at once."

"How was it he had not found you out before?"

"He had been almost as poor as we were, and, besides, he had quarrelled with my father and they had not spoken for years. He regrets that now, and he more than makes amends for any early slight to me by his kindness now. But won't you come in? Mamma will be pleased to see you."

"With pleasure," he said, "if Mrs. Campbell will not think the time unreasonable."

"We have no forms or ceremonies here," Edith replied, "our life is simplicity itself. Now that this weather is so warm and fine I spend half my time by this fountain reading."

"And sometimes thinking, perhaps," Charley suggested.

"Yes, I think sometimes."

"Of old friends, I hope."

"I think of all I have ever known."

He dare not ask her if she thought of him, but he looked quietly down at her face and saw that

its colour was again heightened. He felt his own grow warmer too as they walked on.

"I have naturally more reason to remember you than you have to remember me," he said. "Did you not see the academy notice of my picture?"

"We see nothing here."

"Do you not take a newspaper in?"

"No. We have a library well stocked with books, and they suffice for the wants of my uncle and myself."

"He is a bachelor?"

"Yes."

Another silence. Charley wanted to put another question, but for a few seconds could not frame it to his satisfaction. At last he got it out in a somewhat blundering manner.

"Your uncle," he said, "has never heard— inquired about me?"

"Mamma has spoken to him about you, I believe," Edith said, "but you could hardly expect him to be more than passingly interested."

"Of course not," Charley said, his heart sinking down very low.

It was beginning to be apparent to him that he was not of much interest to anybody, and he wished he had remained at the inn and kept Tony company, asleep though he was.

They had reached the house by this time, and Charley had a view of its comfortable proportions. It was solid, substantial, and at least a century old, just the sort of place he had often pictured to himself as an abode for a loving pair such as he used to think he and Edith might be. But that was all over, and he was inclined to look upon it as rather an ugly structure. The grapes are not long in getting sour to those who cannot reach them.

In a small and elegantly appointed dining-room they found Mrs. Campbell and a gentleman close upon sixty years of age, with a somewhat hard face, in no way improved by very bushy eyebrows, from under which he looked at Charley Gowen as he entered.

"Mother," said Edith, "Mr. Gowen is here. He is on a walking tour. Uncle Allan, allow me to introduce to you the artist, Mr. Gowen, of whom mamma has spoken to you."

"Oh, yes, to be sure," grunted Allan Campbell. "How do you do? Sit down, and excuse my not rising, I am an invalid."

Mrs. Campbell gave Charley a reception that made amends for the grumpiness of the old gentleman. Holding out both her hands she said she was glad to see him, and congratulated herself upon the fortunate chance that brought him that way.

"Edith and I have talked about you so often," she said.

"You are very kind," murmured Charley, feeling himself getting a little warmer.

"And how did you get on with your picture after our basely deserting you?"

Then Charley told his story more in detail, and received very warm congratulations from Mrs. Campbell. Edith had learnt it before, but her interest did not flag, and even Allan Campbell said he was pleased at his success.

"But painting, as a rule, is a poor thing to take up with," he said; "it is a case of all or nothing."

"All or nothing!" echoed Charley, "but I am happy to say that I see the way to 'all.'"

"Don't make too sure of your ground," grunted Allan Campbell, "that's the way so many come to grief."

Charley confounded the old man in his heart, throwing cold water over his hopes, but he speedily forgot everything but the pleasure of being with Edith, who showed by a score of little artless looks and words how glad she was to see him again.

So the twilight deepened into night and Charley still lingered, and it was not until lights were brought that he rose to go.

Meanwhile Mr. Anthony Brown had awoke from his nap, and on missing his friend made inquiries for him below. There he was informed that Charley, in an apparently disturbed state of mind, had left the house and gone in the direction of Skiddaw. Tony, calling to mind his

erratic state during the past few days, immediately hurried after him, forgetting all his recent fatigue.

Refreshed and invigorated by his nap he was equal to a ten-mile walk, and, as a matter of fact, he did walk four on the road before he pulled up. Then finding the sun going down he began to be anxious, and climbing upon a bank eagerly scanned the country. Nothing like Charley was of course visible.

"He's gone wrong in his head," Tony thought. "Success has turned his brain, and he is off alone to explore that precious mountain, where of course he will be lost. I had better get back to the inn for help."

So he returned to the place from which he came, and learned in the bar that Charley had just come in. Bent upon lecturing him for going out in that mysterious way, Tony bounded upstairs and dashed into the room, when two strong arms grasped him by the shoulders.

"Tony," said Charley, "where do you think I have been?"

"Up in the clouds for aught I know," Tony grunted.

"Guess who I have seen?"

"Not HER!" exclaimed Tony.

"Yes, old fellow; and I have spent one of the happiest evenings I ever knew."

"How did she look? What did she say? Did she ask for me?" inquired Tony, in one breath.

"No, indeed," said Charley. "I regret to say that we talked so much about ourselves that we did not even name you until I was coming away. Mrs. Campbell asked then if I were alone, and I told her you were with me."

"Oh!" said Tony.

"She invited you to luncheon with me to-morrow."

"Did she? I am much obliged. So the beautiful Edith did not name me?"

"Not once."

"Then I suppose I may consider it all off, then?"

"I am afraid you may," Charley replied, with twinkling eyes.

"Well, it doesn't matter to ME if it doesn't to HER," said Tony, philosophically. "I always looked upon women as rather fickle, and now my opinions are confirmed. It is getting late, and I'm tired, so I will say good night, Charley."

"Good night, old fellow."

And in less than half an hour afterwards both were in the sleep that blesses youth and happy hearts, the sleep that knows no tossing, tumbling, or ghastly dreams.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER SUCCESS.

THE young tourists went to the house of Allan Campbell the next day at noon, and were hospitably entertained at luncheon. Tony Brown had not his hope quite extinguished until he saw Edith's face light up as she gave her hand to Charley, and then it was put out. But he seemed none the worse for it, eating a good luncheon, and making himself very agreeable to his host and Mrs. Campbell.

The growl of Allan Campbell was worse than his bite. He was not bad-hearted, and he could be genial enough if he got with people he liked. Tony and Charley both pleased him, and the result was that they were pressed to stay for awhile in the neighbourhood to see its beauties and to accept of such shelter and accommodation as he could give them.

How gladly this invitation was accepted need not be recorded. It is no figure of speech to say that Charley jumped at it, and Tony embraced it with the fervour of his ardent disposition.

Tony had found a man who believed in him at last. Allan Campbell had no idea of art, but he was a little interested in it, and such sketches as Tony had in his portfolio pleased him exceedingly. He did not think so much of Charley's quick-spirited dashes.

"Too scrawly," he said to Tony, in confidence, "you give yours more finish."

Tony knew that his "finish" was the work of a certain hand that did no end of "touching up," but he could not afford to sacrifice his one admirer, and he agreed with him.

"There is no accounting for the taste of the public," he said. "Sometimes they will buy anything, at another time they won't look at REAL WORKS OF ART. You shall see my Charles the First taking leave of his family when it is finished. At present the face—ah—the face requires a little touching here and there."

"If I like the picture I will buy it," said Allan Campbell.

"I shall be only too glad to see it in your possession," Tony replied, and in saying this he was undoubtedly sincere.

Meanwhile, Edith and Charley, although generally favoured with Mrs. Campbell's society, had many a sweet half hour together, and out of those glad times there grew the strong love that would not be held back, and Charley spoke.

He said a great deal, but it could all have been expressed in these few words, "I love you with my whole heart," and Edith gave him no answer. Why should she, seeing that she allowed her head to sink down upon his breast, and permitted him to hold it there?

Then Mrs. Campbell was told of it, and she was favourable, but doubtful of the reception it would meet with from Allan Campbell. And when he was informed of what had been going on he growled his fiercest, but lost his anger ere the sun went down.

"They must not marry for a year, at least," he said. "Let him go away for that time, and we will see if Edith will welcome him on his return."

And so it was agreed all round, and at last the parting drew near.

"For a year, darling—a long, long year."

"Not so much for you, Charley. You will have work to amuse you."

"It will be labour, indeed, with you so far away. And you will write to me, Edith?"

"Oh, yes."

"Long letters?"

"I will see, Charley, if you deserve them."

And then their lips met, and the parting came.

The year passed more quickly than Charley expected. He had plenty to do, and he was paid a good price for his labour. Success had marked him for its own, and he was already in receipt of a very respectable income. Tony had also laboured, mainly at that Charles the First picture, which at last was finished, and when he and Charley set out for their second visit to Cumberland it was carefully packed away in a case marked "Oil Painting—with great care."

On arriving at their destination, and the first glad greetings being over, it was unpacked and exhibited. Allan Campbell, whose opinion was most to be valued, was delighted with it. His remarks upon Charles the First were "that he looked very ill, which was natural under the circumstances."

A critic would have called the countenance of the unhappy monarch "chalky," but professional critics are very often unkind, and fail to make due allowance for artistic efforts to portray the signs of inward emotion.

Mr. Allan Campbell bought the picture at Tony's price—a modestone—and wrote a cheque on the spot. The artist had never sold a picture before, and his cup of joy was full.

So was Charley's, and everybody else was happy, and that night it was settled that the wedding should take place within a month, an arrangement afterwards carried out, and assuredly never regretted by those whom it most affected. Charley Gowen has found a fortune in his wife. The first time of their meeting its strong and sure foundation was laid.

NOBLE AT LAST;

OR,

THE HEADSMAN OF ROUEN.

(AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

GAULTIER'S ESCAPE.

On the very night succeeding his incarceration, for his noble and manly refusal to perform the dauphin's cruel commands, Gaultier succeeded in making his escape from prison.

He found this easier to accomplish than might have been supposed.

In the first place, Prince Louis de Valois had returned to Paris, with his retinue, directly after the execution of the unfortunate De Chanzy had been accomplished; either with the intention of deferring the further consideration of the Public Executioner's disobedience to a future time, or with the determination of overlooking his insubordination until such time as imprisonment and suffering should have so cooled that fiery spirit as to once more render it submissive to his cruel purposes; and thus the chief cause of peril to Gaultier was temporarily removed from his immediate vicinity.

In the second place, Gaultier was given to understand soon after his incarceration that he had stauncher friends among the prison officials than he had supposed.

And, in the third place, his noble defiance of the dauphin's will upon the scaffold had awakened a popular revolution of feeling in his favour which proved as influential as it was significant.

Strange as it may appear, he had suddenly advanced from a position of execration to one of idolatry at a single bound. No sooner had the dauphin left the city than the prison was surrounded by a great concourse of people, most of them fresh from the scaffold scene, who loudly and vociferously demanded the release of the good Gaston, the chivalrous Gaultier, and yet of the same Gaston Gaultier who, but a short time before, had hardly been able to appear in public without meeting with open insult or tacit ostracism.

No mob is more fickle than a French one. At the same time Tristan Coupe-Jarret, the novice who had so cheerfully filled the headsmen's place, was compelled to conceal himself from the public fury and scorn. But the demand for Gaultier's release grew so universal and threatening that the governor only succeeded in quieting it by causing it to be known that his prisoner had committed no fault that could be misconstrued into warranting the death-penalty, and that he would probably be released by the king's own order at an early date.

Whether the governor believed this or not is extremely doubtful. At any rate, after the mob had dispersed, he found it convenient to be unusually negligent of his duties so far as the custody of his troublesome prisoner was concerned.

Antoine, the head jailer, readily took his cue from his superior; and at midnight Gaultier was not a little astonished to discover that there had been an omission in securing the door of his dungeon.

His surprise was further augmented to find, upon going into the great stone corridor outside, that someone had placed his cloak and sombrero within easy reach. These he at once assumed, and then, still wondering, made his way un molested along a side passage to the little private door that pierced the prison-wall to the left of the postern gate.

Antoine, the head jailer, was alone on guard. Instead of barring the way he at once, upon perceiving Gaultier's approach, bowed respectfully, and opened the deep-set door.

"Monsieur is to say nothing of the manner of his escape," he whispered, as Gaston was joyfully making his exit. "Monsieur will doubtless

find another surprise awaiting him upon reaching his home."

Still mystified, but without pausing save to murmur his thanks, Gaultier stepped out into the silent night a free man; and at once set out for his home, where he intended to make hurried preparations for his flight to the frontier.

But a surprise was, indeed, awaiting him there, for he found his house dark, silent, and, to all appearances, already deserted. His fresh wonder was, however, of brief duration.

Raoul stepped out from the deep shadow of the gateway and quietly confronted him.

"Has my house been sacked already, Raoul?" exclaimed Gaultier.

"Yes, master, but only by madame and the servants, in anticipation of what has occurred," replied the slender page, smiling. "Come, master. Here are our horses in readiness, and there is never time to lose when princes are offended."

As he spoke he ran into the garden, and returned, leading his master's powerful steed and a lighter animal designed for himself, both of which had been tethered under the wall.

"But what is the meaning of this? Where is madame, my wife? What has become of my property?" demanded Gaultier.

"Madame awaits you five miles from this, on the road to Burgundy's friendly frontier, master," said Raoul, respectfully signing to his master to mount. "And as for your house, there's nothing left of it but the walls and the cumbersome furniture which they contain. Everything else of value is on the road. Come, master, pray mount, and I will enlighten you as we proceed."

Gaultier no longer hesitated in following this sensible advice. As they made their way toward the open country, Raoul recounted to him everything that had so happily anticipated his intentions.

"No sooner were you gone to the prison yesterday, master," said the page, "than I was greatly surprised to see madame running into the hall to meet me, as I re-entered the house. She seemed excited, but by no means miserable. 'Come, quick, Raoul,' says she, 'and help to carry out my orders.' 'What am I to do, dear madame?' said I. 'Help Francois and the rest to pack up everything of value,' said she. 'We must sack the place and start off everything for the Burgundian border before your master's return. We can follow afterward.' 'Why, madame, I ventured, and not a little astonished, I can tell you, 'will not monsieur my master be home to his evening repast at the usual hour?' 'I apprehend not,' said she, with a queer smile. 'I fancy he will be detained at the prison until after the execution; and perhaps even longer than that.'"

"What! did she say that?" interrupted Gaultier, astonished.

"Ay, and even more, as you shall hear, good master," continued the page. "For then when, remembering how you had cautioned me concerning the rumours about the prisoner, I ventured to say, 'Will you tell me how you can predict all that, madame?' she only smiled and said, 'I can foresee still more, Raoul. Your master will doubtless refuse to perform his duties upon the scaffold, and will be thrown into prison, in consequence. We must have the flight already set on foot by the time he succeeds in making his escape to join us.' Much amazed at what she said, I exclaimed, 'Why, madame, one would suppose that you knew the name of the unfortunate person condemned to the block.' 'Of course I do. I have discovered that by the same inspiration that is prompting me in all else just now.' 'Alas, then!' said I, forgetting your injunction in my astonishment, 'you have heard the popular rumours as to the identity of the poor prisoner, madame?' 'I have heard nothing,' said she; 'but tell me what the rumours say.' When I had gradually let her understand that the prisoner was generally thought to be none other than her own father, the Count de Montfort, madame burst into a derisive laugh. She at once grew very grave, however, and said: 'Rumour mistakes, as it mostly does, and my simple woman's intuition is right, as it almost always is. The prisoner will be revealed in the person of poor Bertrand de Chanzy. I feel it—I know it.' I was more amazed than ever, master, as you may

imagine. At last, when I could speak, I said: "If it indeed prove so, madame, surely my master, remembering his many wrongs at the viscount's hands, will not hesitate to perform his duty upon him." "You know nothing about your master's nature," cried madame, sharply; "and you will at once obey my orders without further ado." Of course I would, and of course I did. We were getting ready for our removal all last night. On this morning at daybreak pretty much all the heavier goods that could be removed were started for the frontier in ox-carts under the supervision of Francois. Then madame and the rest of us remained quietly at the house until we learned of the execution at the hands of that ill-conditioned cur Tristan, and your arrest. Then we heard of the departure of the dauphin for Paris, after which madame begged and obtained an immediate interview with the governor, who made his way through the mob surrounding the prison at the risk of his life. The result of that interview must have been agreeable to madame, for no sooner had he quitted her—this was late in the afternoon—than she at once gave orders for her little train to set out, with exception of me, who was ordered to be in waiting for you just where you found me. Madame is now at the little village of St. Aubin. She rides her own palfrey; Marie and the little Gaston are on the roan; Judith and Celestine are equally well provided; and the one male servant who has not gone off with the ox-carts is in charge of your other horses. Such is the whole story, master. The exodus could hardly have been better managed under your own supervision."

"True, indeed!" was Gaultier's only comment. Indeed, his heart was so full as to render him scarcely capable of any other at the moment.

He could only ride on in silence, full of deep gratitude to Heaven at having been blest with such a helpmeet as Gabrielle.

They arrived at St. Aubin in less than an hour, where Gabrielle and her little train were waiting impatiently to continue the flight.

"By what miracle, dear Gabrielle," exclaimed Gaultier, when the first transports of their reunion had subsided, and they were once more upon their way, "by what miracle have you been able to divine so truly everything that has taken place, and to take such wise measures accordingly?"

"By no other miracle than a loving woman's inspiration, under stress of impending peril to her heart's best treasure, dear Gaston," was her fervent reply.

(To be Continued.)

"PASHA" GEORGE.

It was a fête day, and everybody was either in the streets or looking on from the balconies as Vivian Grey arrived in Madrid. On his way to his hotel he caught a glimpse of an unusually beautiful girl sitting in a light, iron-railed balcony, whose face appeared to him English rather than Spanish.

But the carriage whirled by so fast that he had but a glance and it was gone. It was in a street too whose name he did not notice. A quick turn round a corner, half a dozen others in rapid succession, and then he was at his hotel.

Our hero was young, only five and twenty, rich, popular, and had always had everything his own way; to crown all he was as handsome as a poet ought to be, but seldom is.

At the Hotel de Paris he found letters awaiting him, and among them one from his cousin, George Danvers, whom he had expected to meet there, for they were great friends, in spite of ten years' difference in age and the total dissimilarity of their tastes and opinions.

They had met in England the previous year after a long separation, and each had found the other companionable; yet if either had been asked his opinion of his cousin his praise would have been qualified by so many reservations that

a close observer would at once have perceived how little real sympathy existed between them. It was propinquity really that had made them chums.

Danvers's letter was pleasant and full of regrets over the fact that he was obliged to absent himself just before his relative's arrival, and might have to remain away for a fortnight or so.

He had been called into Murcia, where his business interests lay, the care of which, since the death of his former partner, Mr. Howard, had wholly devolved upon George.

Mr. Howard had died a short time after Danvers's return from England, leaving a wife and daughter.

To the latter George was engaged. The engagement had been formed shortly before Mr. Howard's death, and the marriage was now to take place soon.

In all his letters to his cousin Danvers talked a great deal about his love for his betrothed; but he also dwelt so much upon her youth—she was barely eighteen—and her need of being trained and formed that Vivian as often said to himself "Poor thing, she'll probably find matrimony less agreeable I fear than she expects. George, in his lordly way, seems to be playing the part of a sort of Pasha."

He wrote, in fact, continually about the duties of a man who wedded a very young girl, and had evidently made up his mind that to mould her according to his wishes would be as easy as pleasant.

He did hint, however, occasionally that she was wayward and head-strong; but this was the fault of injudicious indulgence, he added, on the part of her parents, and a husband's mild, firm rule would remedy these defects.

Vivian was reasonably sorry at his cousin's absence. But the glimpse he had had as he drove through the streets of Madrid, and saw in its holiday brightness, led him to think that time would not hang heavily upon his hands. It seemed a pity to lose the slightest chance of enjoyment, so after restoring his outward and inner man by a warm bath and an excellent luncheon he prepared to sally out in search of amusement or adventure.

Of course, later in the afternoon there was to be a bull-fight—no Spanish fête would be complete without that and of course Vivian determined to go. The spectacle would be a new sensation.

A ticket was difficult to procure at this late hour, but money can accomplish nearly anything.

The seat he got was not among aristocratic loges indeed; it was down in the quarter where the populace sat, but it was the best place for seeing in the whole ring nevertheless.

He soon reached the amphitheatre; the special staircase he was to descend was easily found; he was in the front rank, and, moreover, had the end seat, close to the staircase.

There was still a quarter of an hour to wait, and Vivian let his eyes wander over the vast assembly.

His gaze made the round of the mighty circle without being attracted by any face in particular, then it settled upon the person seated next him. I can only describe his sensations by quoting Elizabeth Browning's grand lines:

A face flashed like a cymbal on his face,
And shook with silent clangour brain and heart,
Transfiguring him to music.

Put into more commonplace language, what he saw was a young girl in the holiday dress of an Andalusian peasant, with a countenance which might have served as a model of the highest type of one style, and that the best, of Spanish patrician beauty.

The face was turned full in his direction, but not looking at him; the eyes were raised, and scanning the rows of seats above, and yet even in her eagerness the damsel held up her fan in one hand and with the other gathered the folds of her mantilla closer, as if trying to screen her features as much as possible.

Such eyes, black as midnight, yet with a golden light in them; hair that shone as if braided out of sunbeams; a complexion delicate

as the tint in a sea-shell; figure and attitude so full of grace that she appeared like a princess. Somehow it seemed to him he had seen those eyes before. But where?

"Don't stare about," Vivian heard the woman next her whisper.

Then he noticed the speaker, a decently-dressed old body, with a face as brown and wrinkled as a nut, with a pair of shrewd, keen eyes, which grew quite fierce in their expression as they fastened upon himself.

The beauty turned quickly at this warning, settled lower in her seat, and fixed her gaze upon the arena, holding the fan still nearer to her face.

The old woman leaned towards her and whispered something in her ear. Vivian did not hear the words, but he saw the girl steal a glance at him and caught her answer.

"A foreigner—it is no matter."

"You tremble—don't get frightened now," grumbled the companion. "You would come—don't spoil your own pleasure."

"I'm not frightened," returned she, indignantly. "I am only excited."

At that moment the trumpets burst into a louder blare, the signal was given, and the picadors rode in.

Between the excitement of the opening ceremonies and the tumult that face had roused in his impulsive soul Vivian could have given no clear account of what was passing, only that the bull was rushing madly about and the picadors were careering wildly to and fro.

A horse fell, killed by a single blow from the maddened bull's horns, his rider escaping by a miracle; another horse was plunging forward so severely wounded as to be a horrible sight; a third sank down with one side completely ripped open.

But Vivian saw no more, for without warning the girl had sunk forward and was lying half in his arms in a dead faint.

The old woman gave one little cry and tried to seize her companion, but Vivian held his burden fast and said, in Spanish:

"We had better carry her out at once."

He lifted the girl, the old woman aided, and between them they bore her up the staircase. Nobody noticed them. Even those nearest scarcely turned their heads.

The poor creature might be fainting or dead, it was all one to the crowd, they thought only of the bull-fight. The carnage had begun; the first sight of blood had done its work; even a murder committed in its midst could hardly have roused the throng from its fierce absorption.

Vivian bore the girl along the deserted corridor till he reached a little room where a ticket-seller had been stationed; but the man was not there now; the door stood open; Vivian and the old woman entered, and Vivian placed his still insensible burden in a chair.

"Oh! she is dead, she is dead!" cried the old woman, and called the senorita by every endearing name, appealed to the saints, prayed, cursed, and all in the same breath.

In the meantime Vivian looked about, saw a water-jug and a tumbler standing on a bench, brought them both, and returned to the side of the girl, who still showed no sign of returning animation.

"She is dead—dead!" moaned the women.

"You are an old fool!" cried Vivian, so alarmed by her words that he did not know what he was saying. "Can't you help a little? Sprinkle her face while I hold her up."

The duenna ceased her eccentric dance and her lamentations, glared at him, and replied:

"The senor is right! I am an old fool. I don't thank you for saying so, however."

After that she went about her work very quietly, and before long the girl opened her eyes, stared around, closed them again, and to Vivian's astonishment said, in English:

"Don't tell him—don't tell!"

Then followed a few broken words in Spanish, then the old woman made her drink some water, whispered in her ear, and the girl could presently sit up, and was able to think and speak connectedly.



[AFTER THE BULL-FIGHT.]

"Oh, it was terrible!" she gasped. "Take me home, Louisa—take me home."

"Yes, my heart—yes, chord of my soul," cried her guardian. "We must get a carriage though."

"I will go for one," said Vivian.

The girl started at his voice. She had not before noticed him. She turned so white that he feared she was about to faint again.

"Do not be afraid," he said, in English.

"What are you saying to her?" screamed the old woman.

"Oh, he knows I speak English," moaned the girl.

As she spoke it suddenly flashed on him where he had seen that face before. It was the face in the balcony.

"If you will wait here I will find a carriage," he said.

"We will go too," said the girl. "I can walk well enough."

She could by their united aid. They got into the open air. Vivian placed them in a hack.

"Where to?" asked the man.

"Drive straight on," ordered the old woman, frowning at Vivian.

"Oh, senor, thanks—a thousand thanks!" cried the girl.

The old woman grumbled out something and the coach started off. Vivian stood staring after it, dazed, helpless—he had lost her.

Three days elapsed. He had wandered about in a moon-struck fashion, always hoping fate

might favour him with another glimpse of that face.

But in vain.

At last he failed, after a score of attempts, to find the street where he had seen her. As to identifying the house that was impossible; there were hundreds that looked like it, or had, at least, such balconies; and the balcony was all he had noticed.

At last he remembered that he had not yet called at Mrs. Howard's as his cousin had requested. He drove there, left a card, and in the course of the afternoon received a note in reply requesting him to come the next evening and dine with her.

Vivian presented himself at the appointed hour, and was shown into the second of a handsome suite of drawing-rooms, where he was begged by the servant to wait, his mistress would be down in a moment. Almost immediately the door opened again, and he heard a voice say, in English:

"A thousand pardons, Mr. Grey, for this inhospitable reception. Mamma will be down in a moment—"

The sentence died unfinished on the speaker's lips. Vivian had turned at the sound of these soft tones. He was face to face with his lost enchantress, the peasant girl of the bull fight, the heroine of the balcony.

"You—you!" he exclaimed, in bewilderment.

The girl gave a little cry, turned white as the

dress she wore, put up both hands with an imploring gesture, and sank into a chair.

"Don't tell!" she gasped. "Don't tell!"

"Never! On the word of a gentleman—never!" he cried. "Don't be frightened—there is no necessity. It seems like a dream. Oh, I have—"

Good heavens, what was he saying! He stopped in confusion with a sharp pain at his heart too; he had remembered that this girl was his cousin's betrothed wife.

Then he struggled hard to recover his self-possession, it seemed so cruel to leave untried any means for reassuring her.

He did not speak very collectedly perhaps, but the face and voice were enough to give any woman confidence, and presently Violet Howard could look up and smile in a somewhat tremulous fashion, and in turn made an effort to regain her own rudely shaken self-control.

"I had always wanted to see a bull fight," she said, "but papa and mamma held it in horror. I never dared suggest such a thing as going, and Mr. Danvers says no decent-minded woman ever would. He is very severe," added Violet, with an involuntary sigh. "This time I could not resist. I made Louisa take me, and I put on that peasant's dress because, as she said, if anybody who knew me saw me they would be sure to think it just a chance resemblance." Here Violet began to laugh in spite of her agitation. "It was very funny—the getting ready; I dressed at Louisa's house—she used to be my nurse. But, oh, I paid dearly for it."

"Mr. Danvers will never know it," replied Vivian, hardly knowing what to say.

"You were so good and kind; I felt ashamed of the way we went off without scarcely thanking you. But we were so afraid of your finding out, and here you are Mr. Danvers's cousin."

"And very glad to have begun our acquaintance by being of a little use to you, Miss Howard," said Vivian. Then with a sudden bitterness which seemed to hold a rage against himself, his cousin, fate—all things and persons except this beautiful girl—he added, "And we are to be relatives so soon now that I am doubly glad."

"Yes," she answered, simply.

She did not redden, or show any signs of such girlish agitation as might have been expected. Her great eyes looked wistfully at him, then wandered away, and once more he heard her sigh.

And then Mrs. Howard entered, voluble with apologies and cordial welcomes. She was French by birth, with a mixture of Spanish and Anglo-Saxon blood in her veins, and it was evident from whence her daughter derived her charm of manner, though she far surpassed the mother in beauty.

They went in to dinner presently, and a very pleasant dinner it proved. Mrs. Howard talked a great deal and talked well. Vivian put by thought, gave himself up to the enjoyment of the moment, and charmed mother and daughter, forgetting for the time George Danvers and his claim upon the enchantress.

But later in the evening these troublesome reminders came back. Violet had gone to the other end of the room to look up some music when Mrs. Howard, in a whisper, spoke of the girl's engagement.

Vivian Grey quickly discovered that the mother stood in great awe of her intended son-in-law. It was plain too, from her unintentional revelations, that George already carried himself in the house in a very masterful fashion. He learned too that the match had been of old Mr. Howard's making while on his death-bed.

Vivian went away in a perplexed state of mind, and spent a goodly portion of the night in troubled meditations. At first it had seemed to him that there was but one course to pursue—leave Madrid and never see the girl again. But his mood changed.

He told himself this was absurd. He could not be in love with a woman to whom he was almost a stranger. It would make him appear ridiculous too if he ran off in so unaccountable a

fashion. He must, at least, wait till George came back.

All the same he felt a certain unchristian bitterness towards Danvers, as if the man had stolen some treasure which ought to have been his own.

All sorts of untoward accidents deterred George Danvers down in Murcia. Again and again he had to write and postpone the date of his return. His business manager fell ill, a fire consumed a portion of the foundries. There was no end to his annoyances, and plainly he chafed under them.

But "Vivian must not go till I come back," he wrote.

That was always the burden of his letters—and Vivian stayed.

As was natural under the circumstances his acquaintance with the mother and daughter grew rapidly. He went daily to the house. They visited galleries and museums together. Mrs. Howard had led a very retired life, and she scarcely knew more about the world than Violet.

Her husband had disliked society, and she had conformed to his wishes in that respect as in all others. The companionship of this gay, sparkling young fellow was as pleasant to her as to Violet. She never thought any harm would come of it.

Sometimes she was startled by finding in her mind a wish that her future son-in-law more closely resembled his charming cousin; but this wish seemed a positive disloyalty to Mr. Danvers, and she dismissed it as often as it came up.

Violet was like a flower, meantime, that has been brought out into the sun after long confinement in a shady place. She grew gayer and more lovely each day. She had never asked herself if she loved her betrothed. She had been told she was to marry him, and had not dreamed of rebelling.

Since fate, in the person of her father, had decided that the man was to be her husband, she took it for granted it was her duty to comply, and, as she knew nothing of love, supposed her feeling for Danvers, which was an odd compound of fear and respect of fine qualities which she could not appreciate, was the correct and fitting sentiment.

Three weeks went by; two more; then one evening when Vivian Grey went to Mrs. Howard's he found his cousin there, who jumped up to greet him, more cordial and effusive than ever. But Vivian, though he tried to make himself agreeable, was exasperated to see George's masterful spirit, "petty tyranny," Vivian termed it, which was betrayed in a dozen ways, some of them so small as to be ludicrous, all of them irritating.

If Violet chose one chair, George made her sit on another. If she expressed an opinion, he pointed out her error with condescending patronage.

As the evening advanced Mrs. Howard grew nervous. Violet, at first too gay, became plaintive, then almost cross, and finally broke down in a song George had bidden her sing; and when he reproved her in his Pasha fashion she flashed into a temper, and Mrs. Howard made matters worse by trying to excuse her and mollify George.

"A sweet girl—a good girl—but she needs discipline," was that gentleman's verdict, as he and Vivian walked away together. "I think for a year after my marriage I shall take her down to Murcia and leave Mrs. Howard here. I must have Violet entirely under my own influence for a time."

During the last hour Vivian had been thinking his cousin the most detestable being he had ever encountered, but this last stroke roused his anger to such a pitch that he mentally termed Danvers a cold-blooded fiend, and said, aloud:

"Then in my opinion you will do a very cruel thing," he broke out. "Why, separation would break both their hearts."

"Ah, you are very young yet, my dear boy, and your opinions less valuable than they may perhaps become later," returned the Pasha, with

terribly exasperating calmness. "Yes—for a year I shall keep Mrs. Danvers in Murcia! Will you have a cigarette?"

Vivian wondered afterwards how he kept from knocking the fellow down. He got away as soon as he decently could. There was no delusion in his mind now—no self-deception! He loved Violet Howard, and he hated this tyrant who had stolen her—hated him with a bitter hatred! He was the most wretched man alive. He must go away—that was the only thing to do—go at once.

And when morning came he had decided to put off his departure for a week; to start so suddenly might rouse suspicion, he said to himself, in his cousin's mind. But when the week ended George would not hear of his going, and Mrs. Howard begged him piteously to remain—and he yielded.

Matters were not going smoothly. George disapproved of the recent gaieties. He excused Vivian, but he blamed Mrs. Howard. The engaged pair quarrelled. That is, Violet would get angry at her betrothed's exaction, and he would treat her with condescending superiority. She always ended by begging his pardon, and being submissive for a little, but the more yielding she became the more tyrannical he grew, and then naturally she would rebel again.

Poor Mrs. Howard! In her distress she talked freely to Vivian, seemed to think it Violet's duty to be a slave, and yet pitied her; and George elaborated to his cousin his views of matrimony; and Violet alone said nothing, but her changed face was harder to bear than the persecutions of the other two, and between them all and his own misery Vivian thought he must go mad.

Each night he swore to himself that he would leave on the morrow. Each morning some excuse or reason forced him to defer his flight. So the days passed, till they grew into weeks. Sometimes Vivian was tempted to tell George the truth, if no other means of releasing himself would avail.

But he always put it off. There was nothing to excite Danvers's displeasure. Vivian never saw Violet alone in these days, and, besides, the Pasha was too magnificent for jealousy; it would never have entered his mind that a girl whom he had chosen for his wife could dream of being attracted by another man.

And, indeed, poor Violet was ignorant of her own secret. She knew that she was excitable and nervous, was afraid of George, and that she shrank from the idea of her marriage. But she no more dreamed that her heart had gone out towards Vivian Grey in other than a warm friendship than she dreamed of the possibility of breaking her engagement.

But this latter thought Danvers himself put in her head. One morning when she had offended him he said, with imposing gravity:

"Violet, my child, you try my patience sorely. It is great, but not inexhaustible! Think of the consequences if you push me too far!"

The spirit of rebellion flared hotly up in Violet's eyes, but she said nothing.

"Suppose you convinced me that I had been mistaken in your character, that you could not make me happy," returned the Pasha, dispassionately, perfectly unaware how horribly insulting his words were.

"I wish I could," Violet cried, no longer able to restrain herself. "I wish I could."

They had a stormy scene which ended, however, in the girl's asking his forgiveness and crying herself blind and sick. But the idea of gaining her freedom came up in her thoughts more than once after that.

"Your daughter doesn't love my cousin," Vivian said one day to Mrs. Howard.

The mother was aghast.

"She admires him," said Mrs. Howard. "Of course Violet is too right-minded to do more until married."

After that Vivian said nothing more to the mother, but fixed a date for his departure, resolving that nothing should change his purpose. But one afternoon he received a line from George, asking him to come to Mrs. Howard's.

Vivian found his cousin and the mistress of the mansion alone, the former looking more magnificently bland than usual, the latter a good deal fluttered, but with an expression of relief in her face, as if something had occurred to end the anxieties which had fretted her of late.

The cause of this contentment in both was explained to Grey. No announcement of Danvers's engagement with Miss Howard had been made; the time was now approaching which the father had set for the marriage, and within the week it was proposed to invite a few select friends to rejoice with them, and also to witness the signing of certain papers relating to Violet's fortune.

When the intention had been stated Mrs. Howard left the two gentlemen alone. She was going to see after Violet.

"Violet was not quite well," she said, "a little agitated, as was natural, and had gone to lie down."

Vivian had borne all he could. This last announcement was the crowning blow. He caught sight of his own face in a mirror, and wondered that its pallor and his agitation could have escaped the observation of his cousin, sublime as he was in his blind fatuity.

"George," he said, abruptly, "you must not ask me to stop for this ceremony—I can't do it."

"Nonsense, nonsense, my dear boy. Of course you will stay," returned the Pasha. "You are my near relative. You are the proper person to serve as my witness."

"I should be the most improper person in the whole created universe," cried Vivian.

"I don't know what you mean," said George, at last, "and I doubt if you do yourself. But, my dear boy, you must stay. Your going just at this time would look to my friends as if we had quarrelled. Come, come, don't be childish. You are as wilful as Violet. There, that's settled. Let us have a stroll."

He picked up his hat. Vivian moved forward, and laid his hand on his cousin's arm.

"Wait," he said, hoarsely. "I have discovered that I love Miss Howard—I must go."

Danvers put his hat down, and for a moment looked fierce, but the habit of self-control prevailed; besides, he knew that he never should forgive himself if in any exigency he proved unequal to the occasion.

"Of course no one knows this," he said. "You are with all your faults an honourable man."

"No human being dreams of it—least of all the lady herself."

George looked at Vivian as if he had been a school-boy about to receive pardon.

"Violet is not likely to have perceived it," he said. "You are my cousin—just that and no more to her."

Again George smiled. He considered Vivian's presuming to fall in love with Violet an impertinence; still it flattered his vanity; he could afford to be magnanimous.

"No, I do not," he said. "My dear boy, you are terribly impetuous. To restrain yourself will do you good—your going would strike everybody as odd. Mrs. Howard and Violet would wonder most of all."

"I shall not stay," cried Vivian. "Good Heavens! do you understand what I said?"

"Yes, yes! Your excitable fancy makes you think you care for Violet."

"I love Violet Howard with all my heart and soul. I think you utterly incapable of appreciating her, and, by the Lord, there are times when I could murder you with pleasure. There, I hope you are silenced at last. Good bye."

He dashed out of the room and out of the house. George went after him, overtook him, returned to the subject the next morning, positively would take no refusal, and Vivian promised—weakly promised—to remain.

Mrs. Howard had searched for Violet in vain. She was not in her room, not anywhere upstairs. Just after the two gentlemen had departed the mother descended to see where the girl had hidden herself.

She opened the door of the room, back of the salon in which the cousins had held their interview, and found Violet lying cold and white on the sofa—she had fainted away.

But George Danvers was not told of this fainting fit; he would be offended, and Mrs. Howard only thought it arose from nervousness.

It was now the very day before that appointed for the contract. During the interval Vivian had seen little of Violet; she had studiously kept out of his way.

Sometimes when they met he saw in her face that which roused a mad thought in his mind. Was it possible that he did not suffer alone? He dared not even dwell upon the reflection.

One day he was with Mrs. Howard. He had come to dine; they were waiting for Danvers, and Violet was walking up and down in the rooms beyond. Mrs. Howard had a headache, and Vivian was in no mood to talk.

They had all thus fallen into silence, when they were roused by the voice of George Danvers, who for the last few moments had been standing by Violet's side.

"I said it was not true, Violet," he exclaimed, "that I knew you had never been guilty of going to such a place, but it is due to my dignity that you should give my friend the assurance that he was mistaken, that you have never seen a bull-fight in your life."

"I shall do no such thing," she cried. "I have seen one."

"Ah—that time when you were a little girl and went to Cordova with your aunt, I suppose," said he. "Well, you were a child then. But the idea of leading anyone to think that you could have disgraced yourself."

"It would not be disgraceful—all Spanish ladies go."

"That you would have disgraced yourself and outraged me," went on Danvers, waving his hand at the interruption, "by appearing at a bull-fight dressed as a peasant is intolerable. You must obey me—you must deny the assertion."

"I will not!"

Vivian had not stirred. Poor Mrs. Howard had been wringing her hands in fright. Now she started up and hurried forward, crying:

"Violet, you must—you must!"

"You hear your mother," said the Pasha. "Of course, any reasonable, any sane person would say the same."

Before Violet could answer Vivian rose to leave. But Violet called after him.

"You need not go, Mr. Grey," she said. "I am past caring who hears. I have borne tyranny long enough. It ends now and forever."

She was white as death, her eyes blazing. George Danvers looked at her amazed.

"Violet, Violet!" groaned her mother.

"Let me alone!" exclaimed the girl. "This is between the man you chose for my husband and me."

Mrs. Howard sank into the nearest chair too frightened for speech. Even Danvers was startled.

"Violet," he said, "we will discuss the matter later. Pray say no more. You will regret it if you give way to your temper. Of course, you must do as I have requested. I could not permit so gross a scandal against you to pass uncontradicted. My wife must be free from any breath of gossip—any suspicion of light conduct."

"I am not your wife," she exclaimed.

Her persistency angered him. He retorted, in his sternest voice:

"And you never can be until you remove this suspicion from your name."

"He has given me up," Violet cried. "Mother—he did it—not I. George Danvers, I did go to the bull-fight. I went dressed as a peasant. It is all true. I was sorry at the time. But I am glad now—glad! You have had your own way in this house—so much the worse for you! I have been a coward, a child. But your tyranny has defeated itself. I am a woman now—your cruelty has made me so. You have given me up—I will not allow you to go back from your word—I will never marry you—never!"

She spoke so rapidly that George could not

interrupt. Passionate as her words were her voice sounded hard as iron. Mrs. Howard was in mild hysterics, which no one heeded. Vivian stood mute under the great joy which had so suddenly burst over his soul. After an instant Danvers said:

"We will say no more now, Violet. I am shocked—horrificed. But you are very young. I remember my promise to your father that I would be patient—"

"If my father were to rise from the dead and bid me marry you I would not do it," she broke in. "Mr. Danvers, I desire you to go."

Still he could not believe his ears. As yet he could not think of the pain and suffering involved to him in her decision, for he loved her in his way; he could not believe her in earnest. He must condone her offence. The storm would pass.

"Violet," he said, "I shall never mention your girlish imprudence again. Vivian and I will go away now for a while—I will come back later."

"You will not see me," she answered. "Mr. Danvers, you may as well understand that you and I are parting for ever."

Her tone, her face, brought conviction at last. For once in his life passion and pain broke down his sublime composure. He strode towards her, exclaiming:

"You have been meditating this step—you—": Then he saw that Vivian had stepped close to him, and he glared at his cousin, crying: "Have you broken your word? Have you told my betrothed wife you dared to love her?"

"No," said Vivian. "But she is not your betrothed any longer, as I can tell her now that I have worshiped her ever since the first moment we met. Violet, Violet," he added, turning towards her, "forgive me—he forced me to speak."

She trembled so that she could hardly stand, but she took a step forward and laid her hand upon his arm.

"I heard what you said the other day," she faltered.

George Danvers rushed from the room with a precipitation which he had never before betrayed. The next morning he sent a challenge to his cousin, but retracted it before night, and started for Murcia.

Within a week he heard that Violet and Vivian were openly engaged. He pocketed his griefs, sold his share of the business to an agent Grey sent, and set sail for Australia, where possibly he may find some girl made of sufficiently malleable material to be moulded into a wife according to his model.

FACETIÆ.

HOME RULE.

FIRST YOUNG LADY: "I'm sure we ought to be very glad that your husband isn't a Home Ruler, dear."

SECOND DITTO (wife of an Irish M.P.): "Is it Tom? I'd Home Rule 'm if he tried it. He knows better, my dear!"

THE reason hurricanes are not respected is because they put on too many airs.

Hogg was a good writer, but he cannot be considered a side of Bacon.

"Who will kiss our mamma now?" is the title of the latest sentimental song. Don't worry, children, but just leave that matter to your mother, and devote your attention to getting up something about "Who will spank us when ma's married?"

An old tin kettle may not point a moral, but we have frequently known it to adorn a tail.

THEY call China the Celestial Kingdom, but from our best knowledge of it, it would seem that tea-restrial were the better designation.

FRESH FISH AT THE AQUARIUM.

Two pipe fish—water-pipe fish, of course.
A whelp fish—probably the pup of a dog fish.

Shoal of smelts—rather a scent nation.
A scald fish—always in hot water.
A band fish—from the German Ocean—eh?
A tub fish—out of the wash of the ocean.
An old wife—sort of fishwife, evidently.
Mussels—brawny ones, from an arm of the sea.

A whistle fish—useful for calling the dog-fish.

A drum fish—species of double bass.
A blind fish—retired from a sea life.
Tooth-shells—from the mouth of a river.
Pearl flounders—you have to get up (pearly to catch that sort. Funny Folks.

WHAT German classic should have put "B" before his name?—Lessing; for then he would have been a B-Lessing. Funny Folks.

OLD Mrs. Walker was reading the market reports in a paper. "Cotton is declining," exclaimed the old lady. "Well, I thought as much—the last thread I used was remarkably feeble."

"We find," said a coroner's jury out West, "that Bill Thompson came to his death by holding five aces when Jack Smith held four. And we find that nine aces are too many in a pack of cards."

THE near-side horse becomes the off one when he runs away.

QUITE UNNECESSARY.

TEACHER: "Did I not tell you to be prepared with your history lesson? And here you are unable to repeat a word of it."

SCHOLAR: "I didn't think it was necessary, sir; I've always heard that history repeats itself."

A RECOMMENDATION.

YOUNG LADY (examining some bridal veils): "Can you really recommend this one?"

OVER-ZEALOUS SHOPMAN: "Oh, yes, miss. It may be used several times."

MANY actors are like oysters. You can see all there is in them as soon as they open their mouths.

A MAN may be bald without being cool-headed.

"SI NON E VERO," ETC.

OLD LADY: "Oh, Mr. Hackles, you've stuffed my parrot very badly. All the feathers are coming out already."

TAXIDERMIST: "Why, lor' bless yer, mum, that's the puffaction of stuffin'! You know the moultin' season's now a coming on, mum!"

Punch.

HAPPY THOUGHT.

"A—SEEN the Midgets, Miss Venables?"

"Yes."

"A—the man says they'll nevah get any biggah."

"Really?"

"Yes—a—wondah if the beggahs have got souls?"

"Ah, by-the-bye, you might have asked the man!"

Punch.

VIOLENT TRAGEDIAN'S MOTTO.—"Dum per-spiro Snake-spero."

Punch.

PRIVATE INQUIRY.

SURVEYOR OF TAXES (to literary gent): "But surely you can arrive at some estimate of the amount received by you during the past three years for example. Don't you keep books?"

LITERARY GENT (readily): "Oh, dear no. I write them."

SURVEYOR: "Ahem—I mean you've got some sort of accounts—"

LITERARY GENT: "Oh, yes, lots"—(surveyor brightens up)—"unpaid!"

Punch.

A GOURMET'S MOTTO JUST NOW.—"Peas at any price."

Punch.

QUITE BRITISH CLIMATE.—March in the Transvaal. Came in like a lion, and went out like a lamb.

Punch.

THE PLANET OF LOVE.—The honeymoon.
Moonshine.
AIRS (HEIRS) MALE.—Bass and tenor songs.
Moonshine.
A "SPRING" EXHIBITION.—A steeplechase.
Moonshine.
MINISTER'S MOTTO.—"Mum's the word."
Moonshine.

SHORT SERVICE.

RECRUIT (ordered abroad): "Don't cry, Mary. Get killed!—no fear. Afore we land our time will have expired!" Moonshine.

PROVERBIAL WISDOM.—An old proverb tells us that "Heaven helps those who help themselves," but we must not abuse this wise law. For instance, it is not applicable to a shopman who helps himself to the cash in his master's till. Moonshine.

THE "CHAMBER OF HORRORS."—An Orsini bomb. Moonshine.

NOTICE OF A (P)FEAL.—A flash of lightning. Moonshine.

BANK FAILURES.—Landslips. Moonshine.
GOOD GIRL!

AMY: "Oh, mamma, I do so dislike Annie Smith."

MAMMA: "You should not say that, Amy. You know you should 'love your enemies.'"

AMY: "But she's not my enemy, mamma; so I don't see any reason why I should love her." Judy.

STATISTICS.

The official figures representing the results of the recent Census in Hungary have been published, and show that the population of Hungary, with Croatia, is now 15,610,729, of whom 7,695,732 are males and 7,914,997 females. Ten years ago the inhabitants numbered 15,417,327, so that the increase in the decennial period is 193,402. In Hungary proper—that is, without Croatia—the increase is only 138,760, or less than 1 per cent. on the ten years.

The annual poor-rate return for the year ended Lady Day, 1880, has been issued as a Parliamentary paper. The sum raised by poor rates throughout the whole of England during the year was £13,033,655; the receipts in aid, inclusive of £55,569, the Treasury subventions and payments for Government property amounted to £967,857—forming a total receipt of £14,001,512. It is stated that £5,415,973, or more than one third of the whole poor rate now levied, is expended for "other purposes" than the relief of the poor.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ESTELLE PUDDING.—Three eggs, two and one-half tablespoonfuls of sugar, two tablespoonfuls of butter, three-fourths of a cupful of sweet milk, one cupful of raisins, one tablespoonful of baking-powder, and flour to make the consistency of cake; steam thirty-five minutes. Eat with a liquid sauce.

IMPERIAL CAKE.—This is a rich cake and a very delicious one. Cream together a pound of the best butter and a pound of white sugar. Then add eight eggs—yolks and whites beaten separately—a pound of raisins, stoned and chopped, one-half pound of blanched almonds, and one-quarter pound of citron—both thinly sliced—a little mace, two wineglasses wine, and a pound of sifted flour. Bake in a steady oven, and be sure the cake is thoroughly done.

APPLE CHARLOTTE.—Take a loaf of stale bread and butter the slices; pare and slice a dozen apples; take a lemon, grate the skin, and save the juice; place at the bottom of a stone-

ware baking-dish a layer of apples; scatter brown sugar on it, some of the lemon gratings and a little of the juice; then put in a layer of the buttered bread; keep on until your dish is full, having the crust on top; bake in a moderately hot oven. Do not make it too sweet.

THE LOVER WHO COMES IN THE MORNING.

I.

Young Harry went up to the Clover farm,
Very early one fresh spring morn;
The women were busy, and all the men
Were planting the early corn.
Mother was washing the china ware,
Kitty was baking the pies and bread,
Jenny looked up from her butter pats
With a frown, and shake of the head.

II.

The lilacs were sweet at the garden gate,
The daffodils yellow as gold,
And Harry had come to learn the fate
Of a love that he often had told.
But mother and Kitty were strangely cool,
And Jenny, in tones of scorning,
Said, "Girls that work had little to say
To lovers that come in the morn-
ing."

III.

They asked him after the lamba and wheat,
They asked him after the sowing,
Till Harry was blushing from head to feet
And "thought he'd better be going."
"I think," said Jenny, "that you are wise,
There's plenty to do while the day is light;"
But her eyes said plain as eyes can speak,
"You can come for your answer to-
night."

IV.

At night when the farm was quiet and neat,
Jenny stood at the garden gate;
The lilacs above were budding sweet—
For whom doth the maiden wait?
Ah, now young Harry holds fast her hand,
He is telling the old sweet story;
While over their heads the young
spring moon
Is shedding a peaceful glory.

V.

"Jenny, come in," the mother cried;
But ere ever the lovers could part,
Jenny had promised young Harry her hand,
Had promised him all her heart.
"And mind," she said, "when you come to woo,
For mother has nothing but scorn-
ing
For men who can waste their working-
day
Like lovers who come in the morn-
ing."

MISCELLANEOUS.

LAST year this country paid the enormous sum of £62,332,865 to the foreigner for grain and flour.

It is reported that a K.C.B. will be conferred on the Duke of Westminster as one of the originators of the Volunteer movement.

News comes from the War Office to military

circles that the autumn manoeuvres are to be revived this year.

The death is announced, at Carpineto, of the Pope's eldest brother, Count Giovanni Battista Pecci, at the age of 79.

The Czar has nominated a Regency Council, to consist of the Empress and the Grand Dukes Vladimir and Michael.

The miniature ocean of milk in consumption during twenty-four hours in the United States approaches, if it does not exceed, 200,000,000 gallons. It is calculated that this is a quantity approximately sufficient to fill the Grand Junction Canal half way from London to Birmingham, with something to spare for locks and evaporation.

An extraordinary accident is reported to have taken place on the St. Gothard Road. The driver had omitted to screw down the brake, and the carriage, with four passengers, rushed down the incline, and fell into the gorge of the Rous, more than three hundred feet, where it was smashed into a thousand pieces. Three of the passengers were uninjured, and the fourth, though badly hurt, escaped with his life.

MR. BARRETT, at the Court Theatre, is trying the experiment of issuing tickets to the pit, gallery, and amphitheatre in advance, with the view of sparing his patrons in the cheaper part of the theatre the inconvenience of a crush. The plan has been in operation at the Adelphi for some time past.

MR. BOOTH is likely to play more than one engagement at the Lyceum. He intends to stay in England for some two years or more. A great portion of that time he will spend in the provinces, but when he is off duty in the country it is probable enough that, if Mr. Irving makes double prices pay, Mr. Booth will have the Lyceum as his London home during his stay with us.

MR. GLADSTONE has been unanimously elected president of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, in the place of the late Mr. Carlyle.

A MEETING was held the other day in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House for the purpose of promoting the proposal to erect a statue on the Thames Embankment as a memorial of William Tyndale, who first translated the New Testament from Greek into English, and who afterwards suffered martyrdom. The chair was taken by the Lord Mayor, who was supported by the Earl of Shaftesbury, Dr. Moffat, the Bishop of Cork, the Rev. Canon Fleming, and others. The statue is estimated to cost £4,000. An appeal is to be made to the whole English-speaking people.

SIR BARTLE FRERE is about to publish a volume on South Africa, under the title of "My Stewardship in South Africa."

MESSES. W. H. JONES & BARKER have secured a fourteen years' lease of the Alexandra Palace and intend to conduct it on a liberal scale. They are in treaty with Blondin, and have a number of American novelties in their minds' eye. Mr. Barker will look after the refreshment department, and Mr. W. H. Jones will act, as he did with Mr. Willing, as general manager.

In the tabulations of the census bureau we find the number of males in the United States now exceeds the number of females by nearly one million.

THE good people of Aberdeen have formed a committee to raise a fund for the widows and children of the men of the 92nd Highlanders killed in the recent Afghan and Boer Wars. This is as it should be, for the 92nd Gordon Highlanders is essentially an Aberdeen regiment. It was raised on this wise:—A regiment being required, Jean, the then "beautiful Duchess" of Gordon, stood in the Castle Street of the city with the shilling held between her teeth, and the recruits as they passed took the shilling with their mouths, thus, as it were, kissing the duchess. On the spot where this occurred there now stands a granite statue of the "last Duke of Gordon." During the last stay of the 92nd in Aberdeen the officers received permission to add to the inscription, "And first Colonel of the 92nd Highlanders."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

R. W.—The sound of thunder may be heard for twenty or twenty-five miles, or with the ear to the ground much more. Lightning is reflected one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles. There is no thunder or lightning within the Arctic circle.

O. A.—Pompey's Pillar stands about three quarters of a mile from Alexandria. It is a very fine piece of work, but nothing is known of its real character.

D. S.—The following is a remedy for tender feet: One tablespoonful of carbonate of soda dissolved in half a pint of cold water. The feet are to be sponged with the solution night and morning.

J. C.—The following is recommended as a curling fluid for the hair: Melt a piece of white bees-wax about the size of a filbert kernel, in 1 oz. of olive oil; to this add one or two drops of oil of roses.

J. H.—Wash the gold chain in warm soap and water, and if very dirty, boil it in soapuds for an hour and polish with dry leather.

A. M. E.—A good application for chapped hands or face is the following: and during its use the skin should be protected as much as possible from cold water and cold winds by gloves and cuffs, and also from the parching heat of the fire. Cerate for chaps: Pure olive oil, one ounce; yellow bees-wax, half a drachm. Melt the bees-wax in the oil with a gentle heat in a sand or water-bath, and when melted stir in new honey one drachm, white flowers of zinc half a drachm, and keep stirring till cold. After well washing and drying the skin, a little of this cerate should be gently but briskly rubbed into the part with the palm of the opposite hand, so as to reach the bottom of the cracks, and then wiped off with a dry towel, leaving no trace of grease on the skin. This process should be repeated at bed time, before sitting near the fire, and after each washing, and the rubbing should be continued each time, provided it does not cause bleeding, until the skin is quite warm.

C. D.—1. The engagement ring finger proper is the third finger of the left hand, which is the marriage ring finger; but many ladies wear the engagement ring on the fore-finger of the left hand. 2. You write a very good hand.

INQUIRE.—The Chemists' Aerated and Mineral Waters Association, 45, Gifford Street, London, N., and Harrogate, manufacture a very excellent stimulant called Rubine, or Black Beer, which deserves, and is destined, to become widely known and appreciated as an agreeable effervescent beverage, perfectly innocuous and of extreme value as a medicated tonic. It is had, we believe, of chemists only.

G. H.—We know of nothing that will prevent the growth of superfluous hair. There are depilatories that will remove it, but it will grow again, and be thicker and coarser than before. The application must be repeated as often as the hair makes its appearance.

S. B.—To stuff birds, place the specimen on its back, the head toward you; break the wing bones near the body, next separate the breast feathers carefully and make an incision along the median line from chest to vent; having done which, turn back the skin, and raise the bird to a perpendicular position, resting it on the vent. Now skin round the chest, cut through the neck, wind-pipe and gullet; detach the wings from the body, and remove; skin all down the back to the thighs, then push the thighs through, at the same time carefully drawing off the skin, after which, having cut the tendons, remove the muscles of the thigh in one piece, leaving the bone clean. The next operation is to turn back the skin of the head with care, so that the eyes and ears may not be injured; cut away the back part of the skull with neck, tongue and palate; remove the brain and eyes. Having taken away all the fat and flesh, dress the skin with arsenical soap, bind tow in place of the muscles on the bones, and return them to their places. It is not desirable to use powdered alum on birds' skins, as it tends to make them brittle. Fish may be preserved in the same manner.

WILLIAM and JOSEPH, two drummers, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. William is twenty, tall, fair, good-looking. Joseph is nineteen, medium height, fair, good-looking.

WILL, twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

LILY and HYACINTH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty, medium height, golden hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Hyacinth is nineteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing.

GIPSY, tall, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman.

LOVING QUEEN and WINNING PRINCESS, two friends, would like to correspond with two tall, dark young gentlemen from twenty to twenty-six. Loving Queen is twenty, brown hair, hazel eyes, good-looking. Winning Princess is eighteen, fair, blue eyes, good-looking.

MASH SON JACK and YOUNG COOPER, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Mash Son Jack is tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Young Cooper is medium height, grey eyes, fond of music and dancing.

MAG and MAGGIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Mag is nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Maggie is eighteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes.

BLUSHROSE, VIOLET and LILY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Blushrose is twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Violet is nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of music and singing. Lily is eighteen, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of dancing. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-three, tall, dark, good-looking.

LOU and ADA, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-three, tall, good-looking. Lou is twenty-two, medium height, dark, fond of home and music. Ada is twenty, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition.

BRIDAL BALIAD.

As kindred drops long kept apart,
By cruel Fate's endeavour,
When meeting, melt in one, to start
And flow and flow for ever.

Like lovely stars, that rise and set,
Together, in their shining,
Twin-flow'rs, upon the same stem met,
About each other twining.

Thus kindred drops melt into one—
Sweet stars, ye shine together—
Twin-flow'rs, oh, may your life, begun,
Last through Time's changing weather.

Like the gold circlet of the ring,
Unbroken, ending never—
Made one, may Love's bright halo fling
Its joys around you ever. A. M. M. A.

C. A., twenty-five, and W. L., twenty-two, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony.

TULIP and ROSE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Tulip is thirty, fair, of a loving disposition. Rose is twenty-four, dark, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

POLLIE, JENNY and NELLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three seamen in the Royal Navy. Pollie is tall, brown hair, blue eyes. Jenny is tall, brown hair and eyes, fond of music and singing. Nellie is short, golden hair, grey eyes, fond of home and children.

CUPID, nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age with a view to matrimony.

STANDARD COMPASS, twenty, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen with a view to matrimony.

MAGGIE and BELLA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Maggie is medium height, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Bella is tall, fair, auburn hair, fond of home and children.

BLUE-EYED WILLIE, a seaman in the Royal Navy, fair, medium height, blue eyes, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-four.

DARK-EYED HARRY, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark, medium height, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

CARMINO, eighteen, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age with a view to matrimony.

E. C., twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy from twenty-four to thirty, dark, good-looking.

DAVEY and ROYAL JACK, two friends, would like to correspond with two good-looking young ladies about nineteen with a view to matrimony. Davey is nineteen, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of children. Royal Jack is twenty, medium height, auburn hair, hazel eyes.

P. T. and A. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. P. T. is seventeen, short, brown hair, grey eyes. A. S. is sixteen, tall, brown hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two, dark, good-looking.

JOSEPH, twenty-six, medium height, dark hair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-four.

BLACK CURRANT, twenty-one, medium height, fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-five.

NANCY LEE, nineteen, medium height, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-three with a view to matrimony.

ANNIE and LUCY, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Annie is twenty-four, tall, fair, fond of home and music. Lucy is twenty-two, medium height, fair, fond of home. Respondents must be between twenty-four and thirty, fond of home.

ELIZA, eighteen, good-looking, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy about twenty with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

EMILY is responded to by—Ocean Boy.

J. C. H. by—F. T., eighteen, tall, dark.

JOHNSON by—Evelene.

MACAULAY by—Adeline.

PENDANT by—Gerty F.

RED ROSE by—Smiling Tom.

DAIST by—Slasher Bill.

FORGET-ME-NOT by—Happy Charlie.

LUCY by—Alf, tall, dark.

BIRD ALONE by—Lonely Genie.

HARRY by—Violet G.

ROBERT by—Violet.

HENRY by—Edna.

A LONELY ONE by—Tom, twenty-two, medium height.

DAIST DEAN by—Mignon, eighteen, medium height.

BILLY PLUM by—Bonnie Jeannie, twenty, tall, dark.

AMY by—Loving Jack, twenty-seven, medium height.

HARRIET by—South Sea Warrior.

HARRY B. by—Birdie, twenty, fair.

GWEENIE by—F. V. S.

E. G. by—Lena, twenty-two, good-looking.

COURTNEY by—Lillie.

SPORTING NED by—Nellie.

A LONELY ONE by—Jestyn.

EMILY by—Arthur, eighteen, medium height.

HAPPY JIM by—Jenny, twenty-one, fair.

LAUGHING JACK by—Pollie, twenty, medium height.

LONELY CHARLES by—Birdie, twenty, tall.

FOUNTAIN BILL by—B. M.

COURT BELLE by—Hal, nineteen, tall, fair.

TOWN BEAUTY by—Lionel, twenty, tall, dark.

LONELY CHARLES by—Aldyth, nineteen, tall.

ALFRED by—Leta, twenty, tall, dark.

DARK MAGDALENE by—Spiritsail.

HARRY B. by—Iris, nineteen, medium height.

MINNIE by—David B., tall, dark.

DOT by—ROBERT J. B., tall, fair.

DOT by—E. E. H.

SPORTING NED by—Bessie B. J.

SAMBO by—Topsy, eighteen, medium height.

LISIE by—Guillaume, twenty-one, tall, fair.

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